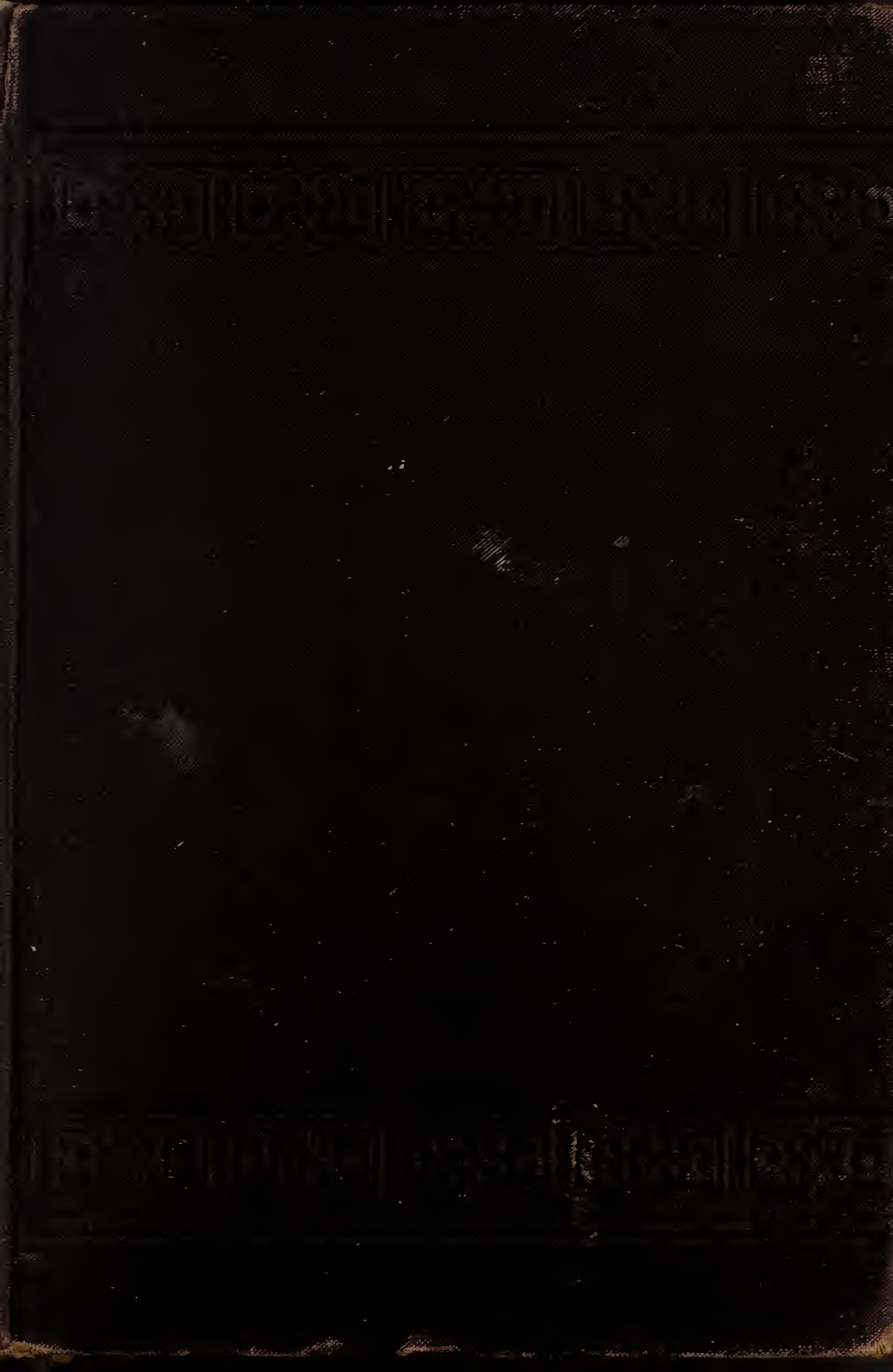


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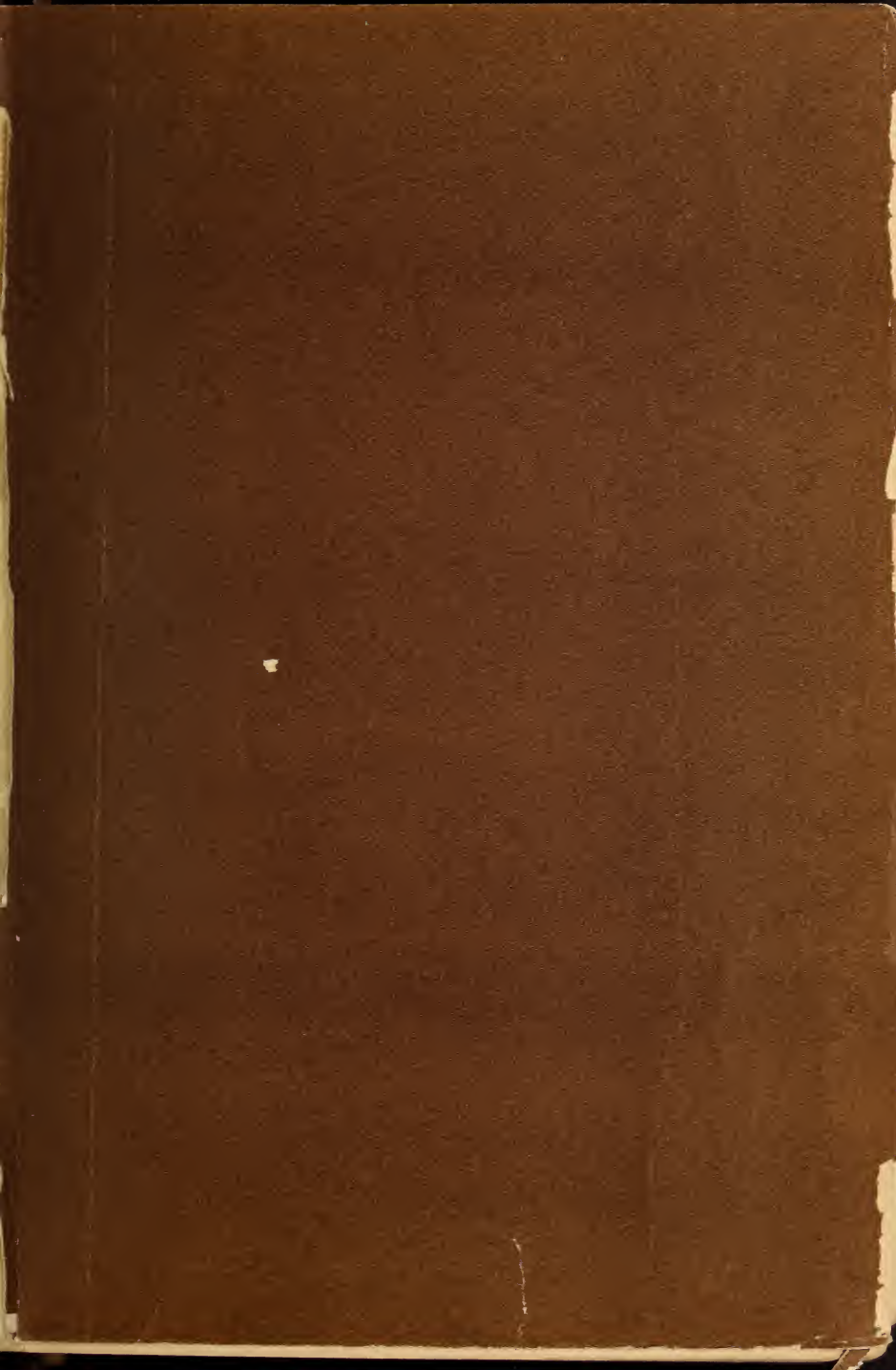


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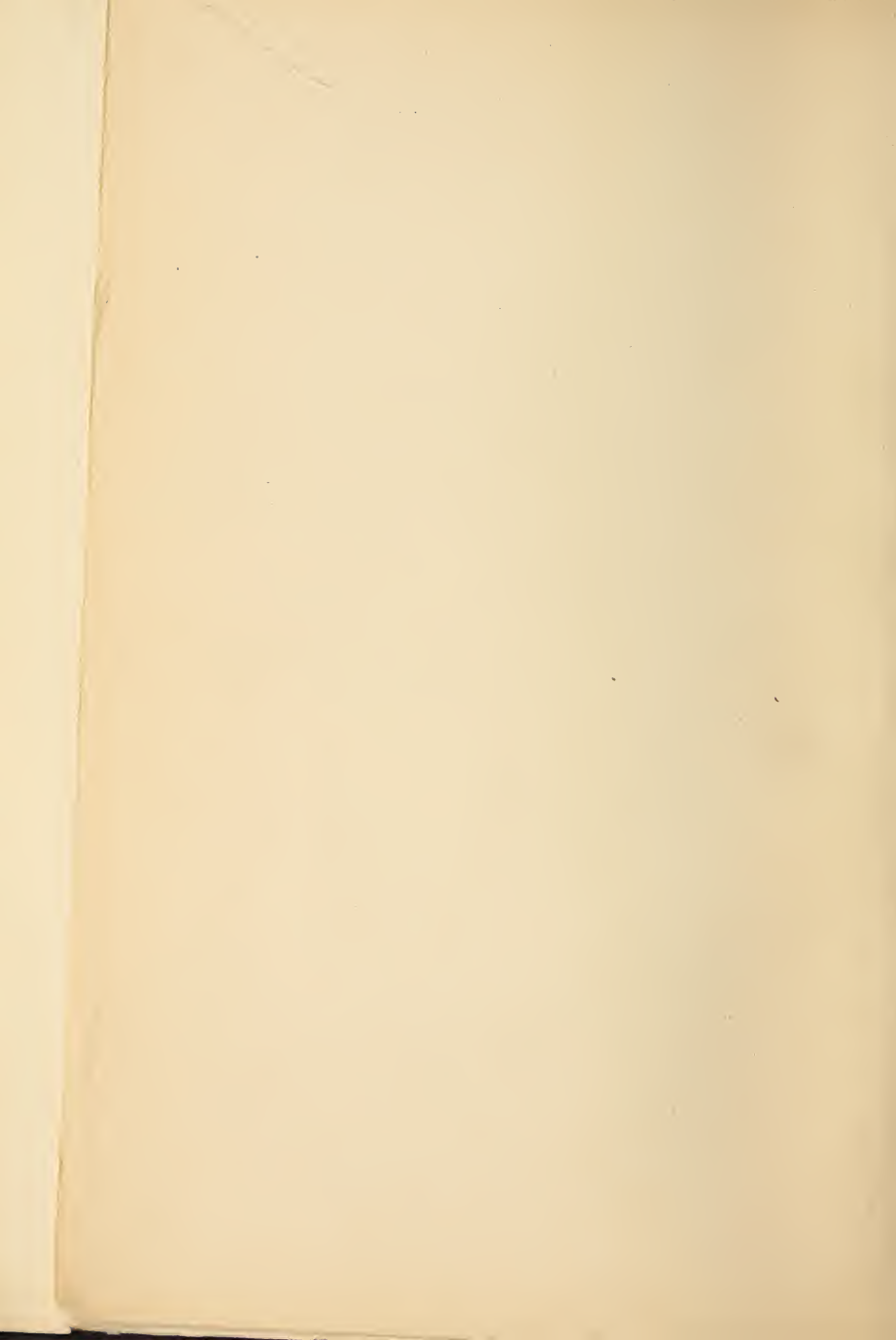
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THE SPIRITUAL EXODUS

Then opened He their mind, that they might understand
the Scriptures. LUKE xxiv. 45.

BY

THEODORE F. WRIGHT, PH. D.

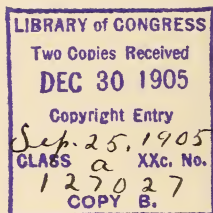
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PREFACE.

IN preparing these studies of the Book of Exodus the writer has made use, for the literal meaning, of the recent researches of archæologists and exegetes, and, for the spiritual meaning, of the interpretation given in the "Arcana Cœlestia," anonymously published in London in the years 1749 to 1756, and known to have been written by Emanuel Swedenborg, whose training as a man of science qualified him to study rationally the symbolism of Holy Scripture, which Philo Judæus, Origen, Boehme and other good men had sought to explain, but without the necessary scientific preparation, and therefore with a result which was as alchemy to chemistry or as astrology to astronomy.

Technical terms have been avoided. The full text is not quoted, but extracts, in italics, are made a part of the commentary. The

maps and plans found in the best Teachers' Bibles make their insertion here unnecessary.

The potency of revelation is not in its historical setting, but in the application to present religious experience of history, prophecy, parable and psalm; and now, as on the first Easterday, it is necessary that the Lord Jesus Christ open the mind to understand the Scriptures.¹ The prayer of all who would follow Him in the spiritual Exodus must be, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."²

T. F. W.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

¹ LUKE xxiv. 45. ² PSALM cxix. 18.

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INTRODUCTION.

TRINITIES.

A LEARNED writer has said : "A certain trinity undeniably runs through all created life, especially in man — body, soul, spirit ; thought, feeling, will ; the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis of self-consciousness."¹ Kant and Hegel have carried the trinal processes of thought to their limits, but no one is so thoughtless as not to have observed that, at every turn, he begins with a purpose or desire, finds a means or forms a plan of ultimating or gratifying it, and so reaches his end in an effect in which the first and second stages of the process are embodied and terminated. Thus three becomes the number of completeness to him, and his acts are always third and final steps of life.

¹ Dr. Philip Schaff, in *History of Christian Church*, III., page 678.

Man being so made, the Divine Life from which he comes must have its threefoldness, as Lowell says that: "Power, Love, and Wisdom, one in essence but trine in manifestation, answer the needs of our triple nature, and satisfy the senses, the heart, and the mind."¹

We have in Christianity the Divine Names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in the Old Testament we find Jehovah, God, and Lord — three yet one; and no controversy could be more absurd than that between those contending that God is three and those contending that He is one, because He is both three and one, that is, three in one, archetypically as man is three yet one in soul, body, and operative life. Thus in God, man, and beast, there is threefoldness; and so again in inanimate things we have the substance, the form, and the use. Thus we may expect to find trinities everywhere. "Every perfect thing must be a trine," says Swedenborg.

¹ Among my books, 2nd Series, page 118.

THE TRINITY OF BIBLE LANDS.

There are many lands mentioned in the Bible — Canaan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, Syria, Babylonia, Chaldea, Assyria, the islands, and all the countries through which Paul passed, but for purposes of prophecy they are reduced to only three, Egypt, Assyria, and Palestine or the Land of Israel, and these three are placed in a remarkable combination. Note the words in Isa. xix. 23-25 : “In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve (R. V. worship) with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth. For that the Lord of Hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.”

In this striking collocation Egypt is clearly placed at the base and Israel at the top, with

Assyria intermediate ; or, taken from above downwards, they are placed in the order Israel, Assyria, Egypt. That this is no arbitrary arrangement of spiritual significance, but rests upon the very nature of the lands themselves, may readily be seen from a brief examination of them, which will show not only that this is the proper order, but that each land has relation to human experience and spiritually forms a step of a truly progressive life.

EGYPT.

Egypt is a level country, mostly placed in a very narrow line along a single river. This valley of wonderful productiveness has a climate so mild and even, that almost no protection is needed against the weather, and a very moderate amount of labor falls to the people. With so genial a climate, with a soil yielding almost spontaneously its winter grains and summer vegetables, with no dangerous animals roving about, and no enemies to be feared, it is not strange that the Egyptian was and is a round-faced, cheerful being, much

given to sleep, and thinking of heaven as a beautiful meadow lying across the river. The Egyptian life is childlike, peaceful, sensuous. The spirit in the hall of judgment gained his happy immortality by making forty-two affirmations, of which one was, "I have made no man weep," and it was certainly a country in which grief and fear found little place.

Thus one may see why its spiritual significance should be given as that of the early life of man, when the mind is happily gaining knowledge through the senses. It is the natural life formed of the knowledge of natural truths;¹ it is the stage of bodily enjoyment and development; its light is that of this world.² It comes first in human progress, and so Israel must sojourn there before it can be in Canaan, and the Lord Jesus must therefore in His infancy be an Egyptian for a time.

When the health is perfect and the body full of vigor, men may put the athletic life above all else,

¹ Arcana, 1462. ² Apocalypse Explained, 654.^b

and then the Egyptian type of the Divine, the young bull, is really their god, and they worship great muscular power. Again, as they seek to go onward in development, they feel, as Israel did, the temptation to return to Egyptian pleasures of sense — they long for the “flesh-pots.” Once more, they may yield so fully to the engrossing enjoyments of the merely natural man that Israel, the higher part, becomes a bondman to the Egyptian, and is oppressed with such bondage that only a Divine redemption can lead him forth, and his Saviour must bring him out of that land, “out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage,” and so be his God and give him the precepts of life, as both forms of the Decalogue say at their beginning.¹ Of course the woes denounced against Egypt by the prophets are said of it in its oppressiveness and seductiveness; in other words, it is the perverted natural man given to disobedience of law and hostility to the higher nature; it is Egypt erring in every work as a drunken man staggereth.²

¹ EXODUS xx. 2; DEUTERONOMY v. 6. ² ISAIAH xix. 14.

ASSYRIA.

The name Assyria stands for the double valley of the Euphrates and Tigris—a land whose shifting monarchies gave it at different periods the names of Chaldea, Assyria, and Babylonia, and still later it was dominated by the Medes and the Persians ; but the Bible means by Assyria the whole region with its two streams, the one rapid like the Jordan, the other slow like the Nile. Moreover the Tigris had a border that was mountainous, but to the west of the Euphrates lay a desert, as in Egypt. With the mountains on the east and the desert on the west, Assyria had a more varied climate than Egypt, a greater variety of products, and rains which must be guarded against by better houses and clothing. It did not use bricks of mud, but made them of clay more skilfully. It had a greater variety of animals, domestic and wild, and the Assyrians were hunters. They did not revere the Egyptian beetle crawling contentedly upon the ground in the sun-

shine, but the eagle was their chosen emblem. They did not worship the bull alone, but they gave him a man's head, a lion's feet, and eagles' wings. The Assyrian was more ambitious and was prone to aggressiveness. The Pharaoh refused to acknowledge to Moses the God of Israel and went his own way, but at Belshazzar's feast men saw the God of Israel insulted and the cups of the temple defiled. When Ezekiel was permitted to see the Assyrian idolatries, men stood in the inner court of the Lord's house with their backs towards the temple, and they worshipped the sun between the porch and the altar consecrated to Jehovah.¹

This is the dark side. Apart from the perversions into which they afterwards fell, the people of the double valley were active, intelligent, and progressive. Standing higher intellectually, they were to the Egyptians what youth is to childhood. Not avoiding danger, the Assyrian hunted the lion; not content with luxury, the Babylonian was a conqueror of nations. They represent the ra-

¹ EZEKIEL viii. 16.

tional in man,¹ the intermediate plane between the natural (Egypt) and the spiritual (Israel). The rational develops in youth with the asking of many questions and the raising of many doubts. This again, like the first love of knowledge, is important to one's development, but it may become a conceit of negation which arrests the mental growth and makes the infidel. Led on, however, to the right end it forms the connecting link between what is lower and what is higher than itself; it receives and transmits its blessing; and it flourishes with the growth of noble intelligence, which is more than mere knowledge because it sees the reason for law. Such a young man or woman the Lord does not call a servant, but a friend, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth.² The Egyptian motive is obedience, the Assyrian motive is intelligence, and so is seen in the Code of Hammurabi much clear, just reasoning, and it is known that the necessity of speaking the truth was a cardinal tenet of Darius and Artaxerxes.³

¹ Arcana, 1462, 2588; Apocalypse Explained, 846. ² JOHN xv. 15. ³ *Journal*, American Oriental Society, XXI., page 177.

But intelligence is not man's highest motive. It is *wisdom*, and thus the next thought is of

ISRAEL.

In that remarkable passage which compares Israel and Egypt it is said that the former is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven, and that the eyes of the Lord are always upon it.¹

In its physical features Palestine has wonderful variety — the high mountain and the deep valley, the lake of pure water and the Dead Sea, the battle plain and the lofty promontory of the prophet's abode, the seashore and the desert border. Assyria has one side like Egypt, the other like Palestine, and so is intermediate, but Palestine in its features transcends both countries. Its climate is complex, for its surface ranges from ten thousand feet above the sea to thirteen hundred feet below it. It has mineral wealth. As the Bible says, it is "a land of wheat and barley and

¹ DEUTERONOMY xi. 11, 12.

vines and figtrees and pomegranates, a land of oil-olive and honey ; thou shalt not lack anything in it.”¹ There are not less than ninety kinds of birds, fish abound in the Sea of Galilee, there are all kinds of domestic animals, and as for wild life the Hebrew has five names for the lion, four for deer, nine for serpents, and nine for locusts. One hundred and twenty plants are mentioned in the Old Testament,² and Dr. G. E. Post’s book on the “Flora” shows by wood cuts four hundred and forty specimens.

In all this abundance and fertility of the land flowing with milk and honey, we see the type of the truly spiritual life. Wisdom is boundless. The spiritual has unlimited development. Israel is the spiritual,³ and if any feel that the praising of the promised land was excessive, they should remember the description of the Spring in the Song of Solomon,⁴ and should think at the same time of the richest and most beautiful lives known to men, for they will show what it is to be “an

¹ DEUTERONOMY viii. 8, 9. ² Conder’s Handbook, page 222.

³ Arcana, 1186, 1462, 2588. ⁴ SONG ii. 11-13.

Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile,"¹ "a life without fault before the throne of God."² This life is not typified by the bull or the lion, but by the lamb; not by the beetle or the eagle, but by the dove. There is no promise made to Israel that is not attainable if, living in unselfish love of the Lord and of the fellowman, one learns not only to know the laws of life, and then to understand them, but also to keep and do them with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength.

It is here that discipline must be undergone, and that the soul knows chastening, and it is here that men may fail when proved and all their wisdom may fall into the profanation of self-love, till they are carried captive to Assyria and are told to fall down before the idols of self-worship. Well is it then if He who carried captivity captive and swallowed up death in victory, is sought for His aid, so that the oppressed may go free in the liberty of the sons of God.

¹ JOHN i. 47. ² REVELATION xiv. 5.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THIS ORDER.

It is evident that such being the order of the life, Israel is "the third in the midst of the earth." The progress of archæology, apparently a matter of chance, illustrates this law. The first of the three countries to be thoroughly explored has been Egypt, and that work is nearly done, with the result that the history of Egypt is minutely known, and all its significant phenomena are well understood. After Egypt many expected that Palestine would engage general attention, but no, Assyria must come next, and universities and archæological societies are turning all their energies upon that remote region, recovering documents, ascertaining history, and making men intimately acquainted with the life of the double valley. It will be only when energy and patience have done their work in Assyria as well as in Egypt that Palestine, with its two hundred mounds of old cities, will be fully explored.

The visitor to that magnificent epitome of uni-

versal modern life, the Exposition at Saint Louis, approached the grounds from the city and made his way slowly along the avenues, having before him these three stages of life. First of all came places of eating and of amusement, and in the latter class were found scenes and companies from the Alps, Ireland, Constantinople, Cairo, the Arctic, American Indians, the Phillipines, besides shows of wild animals, of battles, and of flood and fire. All this was sensuous and pertained to the Egyptian stage of life, to the life of the eye and the ear.

Passing on, the visitor came upon the field of great white buildings devoted to Agriculture, Manufactures, Mining, Electricity, Education, the Liberal Arts and the Fine Arts. Here were grand evidences of mental achievement, of human invention and skill. The self-indulgent nations like Turkey had no place here, but all saw the advance in intellectual ways of Japan, of Germany, and the United States, closely followed by Great Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and others. Here was seen the Assyrian stage of life, where modern

Nebuchadnezzars may walk in palaces and talk of the might of their power and the honor of their majesty.¹ Here is of course the danger of pride and the denial of the Divine through dependence only upon intellectual might, and then Nebuchadnezzars go insane and brutish, until they learn to fear Him who is able to abase those who walk in the pride of splendid achievement.²

Of course it is the central aim of this and every Exposition to include everything that ministers to bodily welfare — the Egyptian life — but more especially to show intellectual advance — the Assyrian life. Only to a slight degree, as is true of the world at large, is there recognition or exhibition of the spiritual or Israelite life. To be sure, the Sabbath was observed to some degree by closing the gates, but the higher interests were only ministered to at Saint Louis by two small and privately erected buildings, appropriately standing on the higher ground and so overlooking the rest. One of these buildings was put up by the Dis-

¹ DANIEL iv. 29, 30. ² *Ibid.*, verse 37.

ciples of Christ or Campbellite body as a resting-place, and no instructive work was done in it; but it is interesting to note that this body has no creed but the Bible and seeks to restore the usages of primitive Christianity. President Garfield was a member of it and did much to make it favorably known.

Not far from this, standing among trees, was a building representing a Swedish house—the house of Emanuel Swedenborg—during the years when from scientific and philosophical studies he had been led to Scriptural and spiritual ones. With its walls of restful green and its roof of red tiling, this house covered a spacious room where editions of the author's works might be seen in Latin, English, French, German, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Russian, Italian, Spanish, and Arabic, and even Hindoo, and where the visitor's questions were answered and some literature was given him. It is not strange that this house sometimes received six hundred calls in a day and was a centre of wide influence, which no one can measure. Here was a manifestation of the distinctly spiri-

tual, for certainly the Swedenborg House stood for that and for nothing else, and those who were present to extend hospitality thought and spoke from no other than the spiritual point of view regarding things eternal.

Thus, in a measure, the Exposition represented the three stages of life — the natural, the rational, and the spiritual — the three points of view from which life may be regarded. If many look at life for the body's sake, if some look at it for the mind's sake, there are not wholly wanting those who look at it for the soul's sake and its relation to the Lord and the Word and Eternity.

ISAIAH XIX. 23-25.

A well-developed life, as the Scripture indicates, will have these three planes in order and strength. "In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians." This means that science will advance and be utilized by the reason, and that both will serve

God. If one reads as many do in the last clause, "the Egyptians shall serve Assyria," the meaning of science serving reason will be still more evident. The prophecy continues, with perfect prescience, "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria," that is, in due time the spiritual nature will be developed. And it will be "a blessing in the midst of the land," because the spiritual must have the central place in the life, and then only it opens the lower planes to inflowing grace and power from on high.

Upon this condition the Lord of hosts is represented as looking with joy and saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." Egypt is, then, the lower nature, docile and helpful, science serving the Lord for human good. Assyria will then be the work of His hands, because reason and intellectual power will not give way to pride of self, but will clearly see the work of the Lord in all that it achieves, and will grow humble as it grows great. Israel will then be the "inheri-

tance," the most precious gift of God to man. There is something nobler than athletics of the body or of the mind—it is religious communion with the Lord, living with Him and from Him and for Him, in that order which makes everything His while everything is one's own to hold and enjoy forever, still all the time His inheritance, bestowed in pure love according to His wisdom upon the children of God as His stewards.

THE BOOK OF EXODUS.

EGYPTIAN OPPRESSION.

THE beginning of the Book of Exodus marks a great change in the affairs of the Israelites, and wholly for the worse. *A new king* had arisen in Egypt *who knew not Joseph*. This may

CHAPTER I. mean merely that a harsher and
Verses 1-8.

more strenuous king had come to the throne—perhaps Rameses II., whose imperious face may still be seen in the museum at Cairo, and whose reign was remarkable for its length and ambitious acts; or, it may mean, as some suppose, Amosis I., who founded a new dynasty by expelling the foreign or Hyksos kings from northern Egypt, and then began to consider how he might protect himself from invasion or revolt on his border.

However that was, there was a new king; Joseph's great services, as entailing any obliga-

tion on Egypt to befriend Israel, were forgotten ; and Israel was oppressed. This is said to be due to the rapid growth of Israel. Jacob had come down with his sons, their wives and children — some *seventy souls*. There were probably others, not of his kindred but servants, as Abraham had at one time some three hundred and eighteen fighting men. But the people who formed Jacob's company were no menace whatever to the great kingdom of Egypt. Pharaoh had told them to dwell "in the best of the land," and he had accepted the blessing of Jacob, whom he regarded as the venerable father of a noble son ;¹ and no people were happier anywhere than Israel in Egypt then.

Egypt was thus bearing out its significance as the natural plane of good life—the childlike stage of obedience, the sense life subordinate to the spiritual. That spiritual was represented by Israel as yet in its incipency. But the promise had been made to Abraham, and had been con-

¹ GENESIS xlvii. 6, 10.

tinued to Isaac and Jacob ; and, in the midst of all the idolatry covering Assyria and Egypt and Palestine itself, Israel stood for higher things ; therefore, it should enter into its inheritance and do the will of the Lord.

Joseph, the last of the patriarchs, clearly typifies the Lord Jesus Christ. Rejected by his brethren because some knowledge of his life-work had been given him, falsely accused and imprisoned, yet made at last the saviour of Egypt and of his own race, and this with no thought by him of revenge but only of compassion, Joseph finished his course in triumph, and, having fed the multitudes and brought great blessings to his repentant brethren, he renewed the promise and passed on, even as the Lord said to the eleven, "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you."

If one looks deeply into the spiritual meaning of Genesis, he will see that in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, are revealed the stages of the Lord's redemptive life ; for Abraham represents the obedient and trustful childhood which was

called to go forth to its great mission ; Isaac with his digging of wells and his thoughtfulness stands for the youthful period of quiet meditation and acquisition of truth ; and Jacob in his hard life of struggle and tribulation represents the young Jesus, no longer showing His wisdom in the temple, but serving as the carpenter of Nazareth, yet acquiring those qualities of saving power which were typified by the sons of Jacob ; and then, as has been said, in Joseph is seen the Redeemer in His public ministry, despised, tempted, hated, yet firm in righteousness, and successful at last in saving man's life "by a great deliverance."¹

With the beginning of Exodus the inspired story changes its bearing. It does not look on the Redeemer, but on those who are to be redeemed. The note is not of triumph, but of despair. Israel in Egypt now does not speak of the promises, but cries out, "How long, O Lord, how long?" They *multiply*; the blessing is upon them from God, but Egypt hates and persecutes them.

¹ GENESIS xlv. 7.

It was as when the early Christians felt in their hearts the presence of their risen Lord, even as Israel treasured the embalmed body of Joseph, but found their increasing numbers a cause of scourging and stoning and martyrdom.

Egypt had taken up a new attitude towards Israel. So is it with all in the progress of life. In childhood all are Egyptians, happy, careless, well fed, and the spiritual part of them is not at strife with the flesh. But with the development of that higher nature comes the "war in the members."¹ They did not think before that they were not always to remain in Egypt by the flesh-pots, in pleasure of body and ease of mind, but now the call of duty is heard. Like a young man who, given to intellectual labors only and harmless amusements, must drop his games at his country's call and gird on the galling harness of a soldier in the field, or be a hard-working clerk, or perhaps a handicrafts man, so every true life must sojourn in Egypt, but it must not remain there, or it will be the life of a sensualist and a brute.

¹ ROMANS vii. 23; JAMES iv. 1.

Thus Egypt resists the loss of its mastery. Israel was *fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them*, is the record. This is well, this is as it should be, and soon Israel will say a grateful farewell, and go out to its land of promise, as Abram had gone out of Egypt in his day, "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold,"¹ signifying the gain of a good childhood for the happiness and usefulness of youth and manhood.

But, no, Egypt refuses. It will hold Israel, it will dominate it, it will oppress it into servitude. The flesh resists the spirit. "I delight in the law of God," wrote Paul, "after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!"²

His condition is signified by Israel
Verses 9-11. in Egypt. The king *set taskmasters over them to afflict them with burdens, and they*

¹ GENESIS xiii. 2. ² ROMANS vii. 22-24.

built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses.

The Israelites had been living in their little houses of earth, by the canals of sweet Nile water, and their many cattle and sheep were their care, but now they were enrolled in companies, great tasks of sun-dried bricks made and laid were imposed on them, and imperious men with whips in their hands urged on the work beneath a scorching sun. They must build store cities for Pharaoh, where he can lay up food for his army garrisoning his frontier to keep invaders out and Israel in. This means that aspirations must yield to lusts, that men shall give up the promise of eternal life and labor for the meat which perisheth, that men shall say to their restless souls, "Here are much goods laid up for many years," laying up treasure for self and not being "rich towards God,"¹ nor heaven. If they yield, their life will be building barns and treasure cities, when they, like the Disciples, should forsake all and follow the Lord.

¹ LUKE xii. 19, 21.

Verse 12.

Yet the Egyptian plan did not prosper ; *the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.* For the Lord is mindful of His own : " Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."¹

Then what did Egypt do ? It was more cruel.

Verses 13, 14.

It made Israel *to serve with rigour.*
It made life *bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field.* It was not satisfied that store cities be built, other tasks were added. So does the struggle deepen as temptations by the flesh assail again and again even to despair. One goes down like Jonah to the bottoms of the mountains, the earth with her bars is about him forever, and out of the belly of hell he cries to God,² and he is heard and strengthened, and so there will be further trial even to that passover which is the sign of final deliverance from Egypt.

¹ LUKE xii. 32. ² JONAH ii. 2, 6.

MURDEROUS PLOTS.

Verses 15-17.

Defeated in the attempt to subdue Israel by burdens imposed, Egypt resorts to the murder of the *male children*, leaving the others to live. This is a most vital matter. In the providence of the Lord inward promptings, good and true, are given to men. They grow by inflowing power from the heavens. The mind knows its births of feelings and thoughts, the children of the brain. Generation and regeneration correspond. These children will lead men to cast off the bondage of Egypt, and therefore the natural man in all hates them and is set upon destroying them.

When they see one whose purity incites in them a wish to be pure, or when a word comes to them out of Scripture which reminds them of the promises, or when an unbidden penitent thought is found in their minds as they wake in the morning, in these and other ways the spiritual children come to the birth, and they mean real gain if

they preserve and nourish them. But they slay them if they obey the voice of their lower natures. They indeed cannot strangle the life of the *daughters*, the good feelings which will come to mind in spite of all, but they may destroy the *sons* by refusing to think out what is right to be done. For example, all know how the impulse to confess a wrong which they have done may arise in spite of a selfish unwillingness to restore what they have unjustly taken, and that impulse no one can prevent, but the thoughts as to how one shall carry out this impulse, what one shall say, and what one shall do, may be strangled at once, and thus the development of the spiritual nature may be arrested at birth.

But again Egyptian hatred did not
Verses 18-21.

succeed, and it was said that the *mothers of Israel* were so quick of delivery that no time was given for a murderous act. Even so, under the Divine mercy, men may have spiritual health enough to save the children of the mind, so that they survive, and thrive, and inherit the promised land of the regenerate life.

Herod ordered that the infants of Bethlehem be slain,¹ in the hope that the Messiah would perish in His mother's arms. So does the old, the depraved nature seek to destroy the new before it can assert itself and establish the kingdom of God. But Herod failed, for the vigorous mother was on her way to Egypt, a good Egypt now, ready to receive the man-child and ready again to let Him go His way in due time to the "land of hills and valleys, drinking water of the rain of heaven,"² the larger life of the spirit. So did the great dragon of the Apocalypse stand before the woman clothed with the sun to devour her child as soon as it was born. But this was not to be, lest Israel, the true church of God, should die; and the child was caught up to God that it might be saved to rule all nations, "and the dragon persecuted the woman who brought forth the man-child, and was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed. Here is the patience and faith of the saints."³

¹ MATTHEW ii. 16. ² DEUTERONOMY xi. 11. ³ REVELATION xii. 4, 13, 17.

Thus, while Egypt aimed at suppression, Israel still multiplied. No unjust persecution can succeed. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Though sorely tried, Israel continued to grow, for its condition typified being persecuted for righteousness' sake, and blessed are such people, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."¹ It is said that *the people multiplied and waxed very mighty*, and that God *dealt well with the midwives*, who represent here the gentle affections for the care and defence of the good and true impulses from destruction in their beginnings.

Verse 22.

One more attempt the enraged Pharaoh would make. He could not prevent the birth of the sons, but he could and did order them to be *cast into the river*. The meaning of this is that, by floods of false reasoning, the natural man in all seeks to prevail. The inflowing impulses come and cannot be prevented, but they can be reasoned into death, they can be

¹ MATTHEW V. 10.

cast into the river. Water has opposite meanings in Scripture, because a stream like the Nile or Jordan may be, at one time, a life-giving current from heavenly mountains, and, at another, a destructive, turbid torrent.

So, the perverted mind of antiquity is represented in the Scriptures by the flood of Noah; and the Red Sea and the river Jordan were hinderances to Israel on its march; but they were prevailed over, even as it is written, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."¹

The dragon, when he saw that he could not devour the man-child at birth, "cast out of his mouth water as a flood;"² but again he was foiled. So *Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river*, or, as Stephen said in his grand address before he died: "Another king arose who knew not Joseph, and he evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children to the end that they might not live."³

¹ ISAIAH lix. 19. ² REVELATION xii. 15. ³ ACTS vii. 19.

Is not this a common experience? The impulse to do right asserts itself; it is safely born; but yet it may not long survive. Reasoning for the sake of reputation measured by false standards, reasoning to avoid self-sacrifice, reasoning in favor of special privileges being necessary to one as an exceptional person — all these and many others may drown that impulse to do right, making it as if it had never been, so that the natural will conquer the spiritual, the flesh will rule the spirit after all.

One may think of such a struggle in Peter's mind, when, on the sad night at Gethsemane, he saw his Master seized and led away. That impulse was to follow Him and give Him all possible aid. The impulse had been born when Peter gave the promises, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended;"¹ or the stronger word, "I will lay down my life for thy sake."² And he had used the sword against the captors. But soon in the high-priest's

¹ MATTHEW xxvi. 33. ² JOHN xiii. 37.

palace, in the cold of the night, with the officers of the temple about him, he began to fear, and his purpose relaxed; and when the time came for speaking the truth, he uttered three emphatic falsehoods.¹ The Egyptians had conquered for the time, and the sorrows of death compassed him, the floods of ungodly men made him afraid.²

To take an instance of the opposite character: The Lord had come to His baptism obeying the impulse from within. No doubt, in the quiet of Nazareth, there had been temptation to refrain from public manifestation and to avoid the struggle with universal corruption. But He came and was baptized. The voice from heaven approved the act. The son, the "beloved Son" was going on to victory. But then followed the days in the wilderness, the oft-repeated efforts of evil to overthrow Him. Like a storm it assailed Him; as in a great tempest, "the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; but it fell not, for it was

¹ LUKE xxii. 55-60. ² PSALM xviii. 4.

founded upon a rock.”¹ With answers by the Word of God He withstood and conquered the tempters then as always ; not slain by evil’s flood, but saying to it, “Thus far and no farther, here shall thy proud waves be stayed.”²

The first chapter of Exodus ends here with the full danger threatened by Egypt to Israel. If this last edict be carried out, all the promises to Israel must fail, and its history will end like that of a lost soul. Yet it is not Israel but Egypt that shall drown, for the Lord found out a way to surmount the threatened danger. So, in every life, its great temptations need not defeat it, and no powers of the flesh need ever destroy the spirit, for the Lord has said : “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee ; for I am thy Saviour.”³

¹ MATTHEW vii. 25. ² JOB xxxviii 11. ³ ISAIAH xliii. 2, 3.

BIRTH OF MOSES.

CHAPTER

II.

The flesh at war with the spirit fears its mastery, and seeks to subdue it to servitude, and then in greater fear endeavors to destroy right thoughts as soon as they arise, and, at last, still unsuccessful in its evil design, it endeavors to overwhelm them with false reasonings as a flood. But the all-merciful Lord has still a means of escape, and this way is here set forth.

Verses 1, 2.

A man and woman of the tribe of *Levi* had a *son* given to them, a *goodly child*, and he was in danger. Already they had had a son named Aaron and a daughter named Miriam before this edict went forth. These children were safe, but this third child, what could save its life?

She hid him three months, signifying that for a time the new intelligence in spiritual things is not recognized and is therefore unopposed. At first the seed of regeneration lies so to speak in

the soil of men's hearts and germinates in secret, "curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth."¹ A man who has been going wrong, and who turns and enters upon the new way, is not at first in inward strife, and he rejoices in a new and unspeakable peace, as the mother held her infant in her arms, while no Egyptian knew of him. So Nicodemus could go to the Saviour by night, and no danger would be upon him until he spoke out in the council.² So Samuel's mother kept her son a while before she placed him in the corrupt household of Eli.³ For *three months* it was that her little one was hid by Jochebed, meaning the full period of the first growth of the spirit, and then she could conceal him no longer from those who sought for his life. But under God she had formed a plan to save him, if it were possible.

¹ PSALM cxxxix. 15. ² JOHN vii. 50. ³ I SAMUEL i. 22.

MOSES SAVED.

Verses 3, 4.

The mother took some of the tall papyrus reeds, then common, now no longer found in the lower Nile, and wove them into a little boat like a cradle. Boats were so made in those days. She then took moistened earth, such as was used in making houses, and filled the openings of the basket-work. This done, she gave the outside a coating of *pitch* or bitumen so that the smoothed surface would be water-tight. Thus *she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein, and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.*

No doubt this was done near her home on the most eastern branch of the Nile, which was then flowing into the Mediterranean near the city known as Zoan or Tanis or San. This city became important because the Egyptian court was residing there in order to defend the boundary from enemies on the East. Therefore the store

cities were builded near the border, and there the Egyptians and Israelites were dwelling near each other at this time.

The mother, aided by the daughter, so placed the little boat with the child in it that it would certainly be seen by the princess or her maidens when, as they had often done before, they came down to bathe in the sacred river for its power to give blessings. Probably there were days when this was done as a religious rite, and the mother knew the time.

Verses 5, 6.

The plan worked well. The princess came, and *when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children.* This beautiful story brings before the mind the cloudless sky, the green lands, the gracious river, and the royal damsel, but the central object in the scene is the babe in his tiny boat lifting up his cry for his mother's arms. And in him, humanly speaking, lay the whole hope of Israel.

It has been seen that the male children were to be drowned at the command of the Pharaoh, and that this means the destruction of all right thoughts of duty by false reasonings, in order to give the flesh the mastery over the spirit. The saving of this child means that in every one is born a dictate of Divine truth which no hostile influence can annihilate in its early weakness. That dictate, this child, is the Conscience, which is given to every one according to his understanding. It is the still, small voice of God's good guidance. It is a priceless gift. George Washington said of it, "Labor to keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called Conscience;" and the Lord has said, "When the Spirit of Truth has come, he will guide you unto all truth,¹ for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you."²

The little boy was a Levite. That tribe, afterwards chosen for the priesthood, came from Jacob's third son, born after Reuben and Simeon.

¹ JOHN xvi. 13. ² JOHN xiv. 17.

In Reuben's name is the word for sight, the understanding of truth. In Simeon's name is hearing, the obedience to truth. And in Levi's name the meaning is conjunction — "My husband will be joined unto me,"¹ said Leah, at his birth, — the effect of understanding and obedience. The priests were taken from Levi because their office was to join the people to God. This child is a Levite most appropriately, because he represents the law of God as later spoken forth to him and by him, and in the individual soul he stands for the law written on the heart, the conscience ordering the life, the indwelling Spirit of Truth, the Comforter. The boy was placed in the *ark*, and this word for a closed receptacle reminds one of the ark of Noah upon the waters, typifying the church saved from destructive falsities by a remnant with which a new religious era might begin. One is reminded also of the ark or chest in the tabernacle and temple, containing the tablets of the law, for they formed the heart

¹ GENESIS xxix. 34.

of the Jewish religion, and a righteous life has in its holy of holies, its inmost place of God, its mercy-seat, the Divine law, respected, cherished, and obeyed.

A modest and almost vile ark it was which held this child — Nile reeds and mud and black pitch — but is it not so with all, that human nature makes an inglorious abode for the Lord? When the Saviour was born, there was no room for Him in the inn,¹ and He lay in the manger of a beast! “He came unto His own and His own received Him not.”² As the prophet said, “He had no form nor comeliness, and there was no beauty that we should desire Him.”³ There was heard in the low rushes an infant’s wail. So has Tennyson spoken of his faith :

An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.⁴

But by the mercy of God, for the help of all

¹ LUKE ii. 7. ² JOHN i. 11. ³ ISAIAH liii. 2. ⁴ In Memoriam, LIII.

others, the child was saved, floating upon the very waters which were to have drowned him. The princess had compassion. It was the gift of the sacred Nile to her, and she could not refuse it. A soft light shone in her eyes. She spoke in pity and love. She saved the child. She stands for that softer side of the natural mind without finding which one cannot help another. Hardness of heart there is, and hatred of religion, but has one not sought and found a way to help others when one has spoken of old times and distant homes and little playmates by gentle brooks? A rough soldier, profane, lawless, brutal, took out of his breast one night a little Testament, and said: "My mother gave me that, I can never part with it, and now and then I cry over it like a baby."

Egypt had doomed the child, Egypt shall save it. The harsh king is balked of his will by his own daughter. Herod would slay the young Messiah, but Egypt received Him, and He was safe. When the heart becomes the foster mother

of "the holy thing that is born"¹ in it, "not of the will of the flesh but of God,"² the new nature has a home, and can thrive, and do the work of salvation, even as this story shows in every stage of its progress. No wonder the Lord took a little child in His arms to show men how to receive the kingdom of God.³

Watching all that happened was
Verses 7-9. the child's *sister*, and she played her part well by offering to find a Hebrew woman to *nurse the child*. The princess agreed, and the child's own mother was soon brought. *Take this child, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages*, said the princess; and so it came to pass that the mother had not only saved her child, but was to be rewarded for her delighted care of it. This is right, since Egypt, the lower nature, must do more than tolerate the higher, the spiritual; she must provide a home for it; she must lay her treasures at its feet, so that Israel shall

¹ LUKE i. 35. ² JOHN i. 13. ³ MARK ix. 36.

go up at last with Egyptian "jewels of gold and silver,"¹ wherewith to make itself for the Divine service an ark and altar.

The child grew in the care of its
Verse 10. mother and sister, who represent those dutiful affections for truth by which the conscience is fed and nurtured until it has come to some strength. Then with gratitude Pharaoh's daughter received him, *and he became her son*, by which is meant the lower nature making the higher its "heir of all things according to the promise."²

The name *Moses* was now given as a reminder that he came from the river, *Because I drew him out of the water*. If she gave him an Egyptian name of a different or the same sound rather than the Hebrew *Mosheh*, the meaning was to commemorate that event. Out of mortal danger he had been preserved. It is good for every man to remember the perils out of which the Lord has

¹ EXODUS iii. 22. ² HEBREWS i. 2; GALATIANS i. 29.

delivered him, like Jonah whom the waters had compassed about, saying : " When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord ; I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thanksgiving."¹

THE MAN MOSES.

Moses, no doubt, as Stephen said, " was learned in all the wisdom of the Egptians,"² and no doubt he had gained skill in writing, and was intelligent in history and in such science as Egypt then had. The Divine law is scientific as well as spiritual, and no theology can be true which does not rest on the facts of nature, so that its truth is proved by indisputable visible evidence. The conscience needs to strengthen itself in the facts of physical life, and then it can control the whole nature, for nothing can call its dictate in question.

Verses 11, 12. So passed forty years, the first third of Moses' life, representing a full period of preparation to begin in Egypt the

¹ JONAH ii. 7, 9. ² ACTS vii. 22.

work of judgment, that is, to regulate the outer life by spiritual principles. *In those days when Moses was grown up, he went out to his brethren, and looked on their burdens; and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew; and he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.* As he walked one day on the border of the desert, he heard the cry of a Hebrew beneath the lash of an Egyptian taskmaster, and his blood boiled in his anger. He looked about and saw no one; with the strength of his passion he struck down the master and let the servant go free.

This shows the first work of the Divine law in man, namely, to reverse the mastery, to break every yoke and to let the oppressed go free. In Moses' act lies the same meaning as in the Lord's repeated deliverance of people from the domination of evil spirits and His restoration of the liberty which had been lost. Moses looked to see that he was safe and did his deed of retribution

alone, even as the Lord trod the winepress alone and of the people there was none with Him.¹

This smiting of the taskmaster is thus the sign of the end of the domination of the flesh, and there regeneration actually begins, when the law of the members yields to the law of the spirit, when "the light shines in the prison," and those who have been put there to be silenced go forth and speak in the temple the words of life.² That is the first step, the breaking of the shackles of the old slavery to lusts and greeds, the putting down of the flesh to its own place, as Moses made a grave for his victim in his own sand, which is to bury the old man in one's own falsities without that hope of resurrection which would have been represented by embalming and an honorable burial.

This is the first step, then there is

Verses 13, 14. a second and a much more difficult one. It is easy to discriminate in one's self be-

¹ ISAIAH lxiii. 3. ² ACTS v. 20.

tween Egyptian and Israelite, it is much harder to judge between one Israelite and another. Yet this is absolutely necessary, or the life can never be brought into order. Men must not only learn to put away the domination of the flesh, they must also learn to distinguish between motives, emanating from the higher life, yet needing to be so subordinated that all conflict will be avoided and the nature may find peace. In heaven the angelic judgment is not between good and evil, for that kind of temptation has ceased, but it is between the good of to-day and the higher good possible to to-morrow. After Israel should have left Egypt it must still advance step by step, as Paul said of himself: "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize."¹

So Moses had a second task. When *he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews*

¹ PHILIPPIANS iii. 14.

stove together; and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? Moses had gone forth again like a knight errant to right wrongs and to succor the innocent. But now he had come to his limit. He could adjudge between Egyptian and Israelite. He could not yet adjudge between two of his own race. Why not? Because they would not accept him as their judge. The answer was: Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Thinkest thou to kill me as thou killedst the Egyptian?

The man so speaking may have been the very one whom Moses had delivered, even as the creditor, who had been forgiven all his great debt to the king, went out and found a fellow-servant who owed him a little debt, and laid hands on him and took him by the throat, and cast him into prison until he should pay the debt in full.¹ So Ananias and Sapphira may have learned to avoid things sacrificed to idols, but they did not

¹ MATTHEW xviii. 28-30.

go on to put away that covetousness which holds back full payment, not from other men, but from the Lord.¹ So Solomon gave Hiram his wages for work on the temple, but did not see it to be wrong to give him a part of the inheritance of Israel.² At this point the young conscience is baffled in its work of judgment.

FLIGHT TO MIDIAN.

And Moses was afraid, and said, Surely this thing is known. So it was. Pharaoh heard of it, and he sought to slay Moses, and Moses *fled* away to the desert. Pharaoh sent some to take Moses, and they were searching for him. No princess could save him now, and flight was his only resource. His life was again in danger, this time by his own act. Pharaoh's daughter had prevailed over her father, now he prevails over her. All is likely to be as if it had never been. The conscience cannot continue its conquest at once. It

¹ ACTS v. 1, 2. ² 1 KINGS ix. 11.

may go too fast. It may be too violent. It does not give time to gain strength for greater tasks, but hurries on with zeal. It expects too much. It must pause, or it will rush headlong to utter defeat. It will rouse so fearful a storm in the nature as to destroy it. It is yet too frail a craft for the raging sea. If we would build an enduring temple we must not daub with untempered mortar. Regeneration is a long, slow growth. In his boastful temper Peter opened the way to Satan's power. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."¹

What then for Moses? A long service as a shepherd in Midian. For the Lord there was the long labor of seclusion, so that He came forth at length, not called the son of David of Bethlehem, but the carpenter of Nazareth. For every one, if he would avoid, after brief triumph over sin, an utter defeat, there must be patient care of innocence, the sheep, in humble ways of service, until

¹ PROVERBS xvi. 18.

yet another forty years has passed, a second and deeper preparation ; and then in his meekness and lowliness of heart, after communion with the Lord, he can go before Pharaoh, conquering and to conquer.

When Moses shall come back at last he will not only be accepted as a judge between one Israelite and another, but when even Miriam and Aaron call him in question, he will be found, "very meek above all men on the face of the earth."¹ And so it is that out of seeming defeat may come a final blessing of power, as Elijah fled to the wilderness and on to the mount of God, whence he came with strength renewed ; and as Jacob came back to Bethel which had been Luz at the first.² So the Lord did not go into the wilderness to be lost to His work, but to come again to the multitude and be seen as the "Lamb of God." It was "expedient" that He went away.³

¹ NUMBERS xii. 3. ² GENESIS xxviii. 19. ³ JOHN xvi. 7.

THE SHEPHERD.

Moses from being a prince of
Verse 15. Egypt had become a wanderer in the desert, and then a shepherd of whom it might be said as Joseph had said to his brethren, "Every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians,"¹ a barbarian. Yet so it was, for Moses *fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian*. Going out in his pride and strength one day, he had without inquiry slain an Egyptian taskmaster; the next day he had interposed himself between two Israelites, and had found rebuff and exposure; and so this judge had become a fugitive from justice. Such sudden reverses are the result of presumptuous advances. "When pride cometh, then cometh shame,"² saith the proverb, and another declares that, "before destruction the heart of man is haughty, but before

¹ GENESIS xlv. 34. ² PROVERBS xi. 2.

honor is humility.”¹ Yet Moses had done no conscious wrong; he only needed much discipline before he would be ready for his life’s work. One is reminded of Paul who, after his call to be an apostle from having violent hatred of the new faith, did not at once enter on the work, but said of himself, “I went not up to Jerusalem to them who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter.”²

Even with the Lord, after all His preparation in Nazareth to bind up the broken-hearted and preach deliverance to the captives, His baptism and first visit to the multitudes about John were followed by an immediate withdrawal to the wilderness, where He endured temptation forty days, which time is comparable spiritually to Moses’ forty years of probation in the wilderness of Paran before he took up his work.

He dwelt in the land of Midian, and he sat down

¹ PROVERBS xviii. 12. ² GALATIANS i. 17, 18.

by a well. The Midianites were a nomadic people feeding their flocks over a large district through which the Israelites were afterwards to pass. They were kindred, being descended also from Abraham through his secondary wife Keturah; and there is reason to believe that Moses found among them records of the past which now make the first chapters of the Bible, and which are much more likely to have been preserved in Midian than in Egypt.

When Moses rested his weary limbs by the desert well, he knew not that he was among those who would care for him, but it was so provided of God that he had found a home. So Abraham's servant halted by a well before Rebecca was found,¹ and Jacob came to the well at the end of his long journey, and presently saw Rachel,² and now Moses at this well in Midian found his wife Zipporah. When the soul is withdrawn from its chosen work for needed discipline preparing it for nobler deeds, it rests by the well of the Divine

¹ GENESIS xxiv. 11. ² GENESIS xxix. 2.

Word, that source of living water of which the Lord spake to the woman at the well of Samaria.¹ Seeking this well, one is sure to find all that is needed for the best service and spiritual productivity.

Verses 16, 17.

Moses had not long rested by the well when the *daughters of the priest of Midian* came to water their flock, but others would have thrust them aside to wait until the last. The women *came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock; and the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.* This scene of strife and relief is plain. The priest's flock was in the care of his daughters. His line, like Melchizedek's, was apparently drawing to its close; the older religion was failing, and a new one must take its place. The daughters were wont to go first to the well, perhaps accustomed to have respect shown to their father's office, but the men with other flocks felt no longer

¹ JOHN iv. 10.

such respect, and their shrewd way was to let the women do the hard work of drawing up the water and filling the troughs, and then they would drive them away and water their own sheep, and the women must submit.

Moses could not endure this. He still hated injustice. He boldly gave his aid, and so the women went back earlier and happier. In this is an important truth. In the retirement of a vacation, or an illness, or an interval of tasks, it is not right to be idle, but to cultivate the affections for innocent things, the fields and flowers, the old associations, the beauties of art, thus defending the flock of the priest against those who would wrong them. The world undervalues these things because it respects only strength and riches, but the wise rescue them from neglect and minister to them.

Reuel was surprised to see his
Verses 18, 19. flock come home so early, and he said to his daughters, *How is it that ye are come so soon to-day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and*

also he drew water for us and watered the flock. Dressed as an Egyptian Moses was, but he was more than that; he had not told them who he was, for he was humbling himself to the work which fell to him, as the Lord did not proclaim Himself at Nazareth until He came from the wilderness.

Call him that he may eat bread,
Verses 20, 21.

said the aged priest. So did the home open to Moses, and the future leader of a nation found a place with the simple good folk of the desert. *And Moses was content to dwell with the man; and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.* The good remnant of a passing religion joins the beginning of the coming one. So Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine to Abraham, and is heard of no more. So for our Lord there were a Simeon and an Anna to bless Him and then depart in peace, having seen the salvation long prayed for in an evil time. Zipporah was named from the sparrow, the cheerful little bird known in many lands, and she represents that cheerful love of service which shows itself in the animation

and chipping or twittering note of a little song bird.

Verse 22.

And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom, for he said, I have been a sojourner in a strange land. In the fruitfulness of a retired life preparing for a larger public work, there is a record to be made in gratitude, a desert child to bring up to strength, in remembrance of mercies shown in days of sojourn ere as yet the full inheritance has been gained.

Verse 23.

So passed the second forty years of Moses' life, and all this time the suffering Israelites groaned under their burdens, *and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.* The patience of the Lord can be explained only by His love, even of the sinner. Egypt will be borne with as long as is possible, until it brings upon itself a heavy judgment. At the same time Israel must slowly learn to dislike Egypt, or it will return to it after deliverance. It must cry out again and again, until despair has ripened its desire to depart. So is it with all men that no hasty decision against evil is sufficient, but

the struggle must continue until all the love of evil is uprooted. In their small measure men must be able to say with the Lord, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me,"¹ for when the spirit is willing, the flesh may still be weak.²

Verses 24, 25.

God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob; and God looked upon the children of Israel, and God took knowledge of them. The Lord never forgets and never needs to be reminded, but the mind must bring itself by prayer to receive His gifts made wisely, and so He "bears long" with His children until the promises of the primeval covenant come true, and He "avenges His own elect who cry day and night unto Him,"³ as they pray, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge?"⁴

¹ JOHN xiv. 30. ² MATTHEW xxvi. 41. ³ LUKE xviii. 11.
⁴ REVELATION vi. 10.

CALLED OF GOD.

CHAPTER III.

Verses 1-3

Leading the flock to *the back* or *western side of the wilderness*, Moses *came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb*. There the long retirement was ended. A shepherd of the Midianites one hour, the next he was the chosen man of God. A fiery shrub arrested his steps: *he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed*. He said, *I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned*. So easy is the transition of sight from the eye of the flesh to the eye of the spirit that Abraham and Jacob and the prophets beheld scenes of heaven, and described them for the instruction of mankind, not realizing the fact that so far they had gone from this world to the next by putting aside for the time the fleshly envelope of their spirits. The fire in the bush was a sign of Divine Love revealing itself to Moses as all the glorious scenery of heaven reveals it. And this was granted him because the Lord by His

angel would reveal His will to Moses. Whenever angels were seen by men, "the glory of the Lord shone round about them."¹

The angel's voice was heard calling him by name, and the answer was, *Here am I*. Humanity is not to be moved like machinery; it is to act in freedom for the Lord. Moses must *turn aside* to see, the soul must turn to God. *Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*. Men cannot serve the Lord irreverently. They must revere their task as a gift of God. They must stand before it humbly, and put off their shoes to signify the putting away of all defiling thought: "be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."² Men must make holy ground of their ways of life; temples, and not dens of thieves. Moses standing there with bowed head and bared feet as before an altar, represents the soul reverently receiving its task, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"³ "Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth."⁴

¹ LUKE ii. 9. ² ISAIAH lii. 11. ³ ACTS ix. 6. ⁴ 1 SAMUEL iii. 10.

Verses 6-8.

Then the angelic voice said from heaven that the God who had led the fathers would lead the sons, and while Moses *hid his face* in awe, he heard gracious words of promise that Israel would go out to *a good land and a large, flowing with milk and honey*. This is the spiritual life, better and larger than the natural life, and teeming with innocence and peace. The land was said to be then held by the *Canaanites* and other tribes because men must win it against the rivalry of the old nature in them.

Verses 9-11.

Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people out of Egypt. And Moses said, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh? The soul may well stand appalled at the largeness of its task. It feels all inadequate. There is obviously a good side to this doubt of one's self. As David said to Saul, "Who am I, that I should be son-in-law to the king?"¹ as Isaiah, overwhelmed with awe, exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips;"² as the

¹ 1 SAMUEL xviii. 18. ² ISAIAH vi. 5.

shrinking Jeremiah said, "Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child;"¹ as even Peter cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord";² and as Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord,³ so did Moses shrink. How often does the young man draw back from the call of country or church to their service! How often does the true-hearted maiden dread the large duty of wife and mother! And the Lord answers always, "Fear not, I will be with thee."⁴

Verse 12.

The Lord's answer to Moses was that all would be well, and that they should come to Horeb and receive a sign; and so it came out that they came to Horeb a horde of fugitives, and left it a nation and the church of God.

Verse 13.

But Moses persisted that he did not even know the *name* of this God who spoke with him, and so could not tell it to his brethren. This is true in all senses. The call of

¹ JEREMIAH i. 6. ² LUKE v. 8. ³ JONAH i. 3. ⁴ ISAIAH xlviii. 1, 2.

duty does not fully make God known to one. That must come afterwards as they work together for good. "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" said the man who had been blind till now, and then to his seeing eyes the Lord could say, "It is He that talketh with thee." And at once came the word, "Lord, I believe."¹

Israel had lost the sense of the
Verses 14, 15.

presence of its God, hence degradation and slavery; it was now to know Him as the fathers had known Him, hence deliverance and nobility. And Israel was to know God as *the I am*. Thus shalt thou say, *I am hath sent me unto you*. This phrase, *I am that I am*, may seem abstract and metaphysical, but it expresses the practical thought which every one needs who does his duty in life; and that thought is that this is God's world, not Satan's, and that He is in His world, the source of its life and the ordering spirit in human affairs. *I am* — that is the essential life, the Divine Love; *I am that I am* — that

¹ JOHN ix. 36-38.

is love as revealed in its going forth. Here is the aspect of Father and Son, the inmost Divine and the Divine brought forth to view. "I and the Father are one," said the Lord Jesus to the Jews; "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." ¹

Obeying God's call, men rise by the temporal to the eternal; as good and faithful servants they inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.² The Divine reveals to them its eternal unchangeableness, and they know that they serve the *I am* forever. As Mrs. Browning puts it:—

I smiled to think God's greatness
Flowed around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness — His rest.³

Verses 16-18.

Moses must go, must *gather the elders of Israel together*, and tell them his great message, and then they must all *come unto the King of Egypt*, and ask for leave to

¹ JOHN x. 30; xiv. 10. ² MATTHEW xxv. 21. ³ The Duchess May.

go *three days' journey into the wilderness*, to make an offering unto the God of the Hebrews. It is to be observed that they would not ask at first entire liberty, but only for a respite of labor for a brief three days' religious festival. So gradually is the spirit to be loosened from the domination of the flesh. The flesh is, so to speak, deceived. It is not asked to surrender its will all at once; it is only asked to yield a little, only so far as to obey the voice of God and confess Him. This is the first step, others will follow; but this is enough for the time, to give the Spirit its one day in seven, its chance to go and bow down before its God.

Verse 19. No request to Egypt could be more reasonable, but God warned Moses that it would be refused by *a mighty hand*, that Israel would be powerfully prevented from enjoying one breath of liberty. So it is; the flesh is unmerciful, a taskmaster of fearful obstinacy. "Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man."¹ "Preserve me, O Lord, from the

¹ PSALM lxxi. 4.

violent man, who hath purposed to overthrow my goings."¹

Verse 20.

And because of this wicked determination to rule or ruin, the Lord said that He would *stretch out His hand and smite Egypt*. The obstinacy of wickedness brings on punishments until it is subdued. *After that he will let you go*. The sufferings of wickedness are in consequence of its inability to prevail over good; it gnashes its teeth because there is light and peace in the Lord's house of the wedding.² In the deadly struggle between flesh and spirit, all the power of the Infinite Redeemer seems to be needed, so fast is man bound to his sinfulness, but at last, even when he is in despair, captivity is led captive, and so death is swallowed up in victory.

Verses 21, 22.

The Lord said that He would *give the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians*, that is, the flesh will at last submit to the will of God; and then it would be that the people would *not go empty*, but should *ask*—not

¹ PSALM cxl. 4. ² MATTHEW xxii. 13.

borrow, but ask — *gold and silver and raiment* of Egypt to adorn the *sons and daughters* of Israel. Thus would they *despoil the Egyptians*. The true life takes something of value from every experience. A sickness teaches patience. A disappointment teaches humility. The necessarily long conflict with the lower nature gives sympathy for others and skill to aid them. The sons and daughters of Israel, that is, the qualities of the regenerate mind, are enriched by the wages of patient endurance. At last the flesh acknowledges its debt to the spirit and places itself at its service. Well is it for one in the stress of the earthly life if he can receive of the Lord his talent, and make it gain by faithful though arduous labors ten talents more. Then shall he go out of his tribulation forever and enter into the joy of his Lord, dwelling with Him in His holy mountain.

SIGNS OF THE CALL.

Moses had been prepared for his great office,
CHAPTER both by his training in Egypt and his
IV. discipline in the wilderness, and he
had been called to his task. He would be able to
lead his people along a familiar pathway to the
mount of God. By wonderful ways the child con-
demned to be drowned had been preserved and
made ready for this task. The Lord had a great
work for this man to do, and he alone of all men
on earth was qualified to do it. So does God raise
up one soul for one work.

Called from the flaming bush Moses was at first
overwhelmed with the magnitude of his office.
“Who am I?” he had asked, and who was the
God who called him he must also know, and his
questions had been answered.

Yet still he hesitates : *Behold, they*
Verse 1. *will not believe me, nor hearken to my*
voice ; for they will say, the Lord hath not appeared
to thee. This seeming disobedience shows how

slowly the sense of duty grows upon the mind. The whole natural man holds back, like Saul hiding among the stuff,¹ like Jonah fleeing to the west from his errand to Nineveh,² like Peter with his, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this death shall not be unto thee."³ So is it with all; the old nature in a man resists the call of God, and, doubting everything, even the power of God to do His own work, would disobey Him in self-love.

But the Lord is very patient with all, with the bruised reed and the smoking flax. He said,

What is that in thine hand? A rod.
Verses 2, 3.

Cast it on the ground. He cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses fled from before it. This rod, with which so many wonders were afterwards wrought, was the shepherd's staff with which the sheep were guided and defended. It is the type of power in sovereign's sceptre or warrior's lance. And what is it to cast it on the ground? It is to debase it, to turn the gift, bestowed by God for His noble purposes, to

¹ 1 SAMUEL x. 22. ² JONAH i. 3. ³ MATTHEW xvi. 22.

selfish ends. And the rod, so cast down, became a serpent from which Moses shrank because the snake typifies the low power which reared itself against God in Eden,¹ and which in the Patmos vision is called "the dragon, that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan."² It stands for sensualism.

So was evidence given of what results when the power of man from God is not put forth in His service, but is turned to the service of self.

Verse 4.

But the Lord said that he should seize upon the serpent, and he did, and again his rod was in his hand, and thus he and Israel were assured of power, if rightly used.

Another sign of even greater force: *Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he*

Verse 6.

put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. To put the hand into the bosom in this state of unbelief is to look away from the Lord to self, to put one's power to selfish and not to Divine

¹ GENESIS iii. 1-5. ² REVELATION xx. 2.

purposes. And this defiles and corrupts the hand because the end is sordid and the object mean. Miriam in rebellion against Moses,¹ Gehazi hiding for himself the gifts of Naaman and covering his theft by lying to Elisha,² Uzziah rejecting the priests and seeking to burn incense in their stead,³ all became leprous to signify the moral rottenness of the life for self. But with the Lord there is forgiveness that He may be feared, and He said to Moses, *Put thine hand into thy bosom again*; and so he was healed, for the self-life serving God is good.

Here were two signs, and there was yet a third, not then wrought out but described to be done in Egypt if Israel were still unbelieving. He should *take water of the river and pour it upon the dry land*, and it would be *blood upon the dry land*. This third sign completes the trine, showing the last stage of unbelief. First the power to do good, being degraded to the sensual life, becomes harmful; then the strength is

¹ NUMBERS xii. 10. ² 2 KINGS v. 27. ³ 2 CHRONICLES xxvi. 19.

all made corrupt ; then the very truth of the mind, being cast down to earth, is changed to vile falsity, as the pools left stagnant by the annual fall of the Nile bred red organisms which made the water poisonous.

MOSES' LACK OF WORDS.

With these signs Moses might go his way well warned and well armed ; but no, he has pleaded the unbelief of the others, he now urges his own incapacity: *O Lord, I am not elo-*
Verse 10.
quent, neither heretofore nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant, for I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. As he searched high and low for reasons why he should be excused, he came upon an important fact. Literally he said that he was not *a man of words*. It appears that his long absence from Egypt and Israel, and usage of the Midianite dialect, added to natural difficulty of expression, had made him slow or heavy in trying to put his message into a form suited to those whom he must address in Egypt.

It appears also that he had taken time to think what he could say, but had found few words in his mind, and was thus discouraged, and was saying that he did not find words at first, nor had he found them since he was spoken to, meaning after he had thought awhile.

To this fear the Lord answered that His was the power of speech ; and He added, *Now therefore*

Verses 11, 12. *go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.* So

was it with the Lord's disciples who had no learning by which they could speak either at Jerusalem or abroad, for they could mutter only the rude speech of Galilee, but they were told : " Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak ; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you ;"¹ and again the Lord said : " Settle it therefore in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer, for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your ad-

¹ MATTHEW x. 19, 20.

versaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist.”¹ And this promise was especially fulfilled at Pentecost when the spirit gave them utterance, and the multitude was amazed and said : “ Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans ; and how hear we every man in our own tongue in which we were born ? ”²

But the need of Moses was supplied in another way, and this for a remarkable reason, namely, that the Divine Word needs interpretation, or it remains sealed. The Lord’s truth was to be given by Moses, not directly but through another. It must be retold in the language of Aaron, or it would not be understood and become effective. The slowness of Moses’ speech describes the great and eternal fact that doctrine must be drawn from the Word and applied to human needs, or the revelation will fail to help. For example, the Book of Revelation was cast out of the Bible by Luther as meaningless, yet it holds the whole history of Christianity when adequately ex-

¹ LUKE xxi. 14, 15. ² ACTS ii. 7, 8.

plained, and becomes transparently instructive. So it is with all prophecy, that it needs a Divinely illumined interpreter. And so it is with the Pentateuch, which has the hue of the dead past until it is opened, and its spiritual meaning is shown to relate to the Lord as the Redeemer and to true life to-day and forever. And this interpretation is represented by Moses' brother Aaron, so that there was a dual leadership — the Lord led His people, "like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."¹ Even so are men led now day unto day, if they walk in the light. They were not so led when the Bible was kept away from them and papal dogma was substituted, for then in effect Aaron was in rebellion against Moses and had displaced him. Nor are they so led when, through going to the other extreme, men read their Bibles without doctrine, and find the meaning obscure if not contradictory, and so give up the reading and say: "It matters not what we believe;" for it does matter. The agnostic of this day has

¹ PSALM lxxvii. 20.

Moses, but not Aaron, when all the time the Lord has opened His Word in a rational way.

AARON'S PART.

Moses' next words, *O Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send*, are not

Verse 13. easily put into English, for the utterance was excited, as if Moses, angered by the Divine insistence that he should do

his great duty, or seeing now no way of escape, abruptly declared that the Lord must send some one else than himself. The Lord knew all along what He was doing, that Moses could do this work with Aaron's aid, and so we read that He was

Verse 14. *angry with Moses* at this point, but that is only said because to man's

waywardness the Lord's control seems severe, but His deeds to the most sinful embody only love.

The Lord said, *Is there not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee, and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.* As the

Lord had called Moses at the bush, so Aaron had been moved to go over the border and meet the long lost brother of whose coming he was made aware. And thus while Moses was wholly ignorant of this help and therefore despondent, the help was coming, as under the Divine Providence Jonah was preserved to do his errand after all, and Israel was graven on the palm of the Divine hand¹ in its darkest hour :

Behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His
own.²

And the voice went on to say, *Thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth ; and I will be with thy mouth and with his*
Verses 15, 16. *mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people ; and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee for mouth, and thou shalt be to him for God.*
In all this is no anger, only the mercy of Him who is "long suffering, and abundant in good-

¹ ISAIAH xlix, 16. ² Lowell, Present Crisis.

ness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands."¹ Through Aaron Moses will speak, the law of God will avail through interpretation; and all the inspiration and power of such interpretation are in the Word itself, as it is written here, *he shall be to thee for mouth and thou to him for God.*

And one other command was given to Moses, *Thou shalt take in thy hand this rod, wherewith thou shalt do signs.* With the staff

Verse 17.

of the shepherd he shall stand before Pharaoh and show the evidences of his high office, the former life merging into the later, as David from shepherd became king when, "from following the ewes great with young, God brought him to feed Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance;"² and as Amos said of himself, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and said, Go, prophecy."³

Out of the quiet shepherding of the innocent qualities of the heart one is made ready to be a

¹ EXODUS xxxiv. 6, 7. ² PSALM lxxviii. 71. ³ AMOS vii. 14, 15.

pastor to others, leading them on from the sense life through many tribulations to the spirit life, where the Lamb in the midst of the great white throne shall feed them, He who was the Good Shepherd and for the sheep laid down His life that He might take it again, so that His children, His flock, might go in and out, and find pasture. The rod had become the "rod of God," as it was afterwards called, and the man who bears it in faith is to be called, as was Moses, "a man of God."¹

FROM MIDIAN TO EGYPT.

In preparing for the Divine mission Moses took his flock home, and said to his father-in-law, *Let*

Verse 18. *me go, I pray thee, and return unto
my brethren who are in Egypt, and
see whether they be yet alive.*

He had served long and well as a shepherd and so was fitted for the higher task. It is seen that he did not tell to the Midianites what had happened to him, nor did he

¹Verse 20, Chapter xvii. 9; DEUTERONOMY xxxiii. 1; JOSHUA xiv. 6.

declare his full mission to Egypt ; and this was because the matter was between him and God, and he was not able fully to tell what he would do until the day came when Israel would be following him toward the mount. To talk fully now with the kindly people of the desert would have been premature, as our Lord could not explain His full purpose before going out of Nazareth, and must say to Peter, even at the end of much teaching, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter ; whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards."¹ Moses would see, he said, if his brethren were yet alive. He thought of their woe and longed to help them. As the spiritual part quickens into life it seeks to join itself to all men to help and to save ; as Joseph had said, "Doth my father yet live ?"²

Jethro answered Moses' request with his *Go in peace*, the benediction of the passing state, the reverent dismissal of the guest to his higher

¹ JOHN xiii. 7, 36. ² GENESIS xlv. 3.

sphere of work. Jethro was no Pharaoh, but obeyed the Divine teaching. A new message soon came to Moses to strengthen him, for God told him that they were now dead who sought his life, so that he could indeed go in peace to the old land. New temptations assail when new duties come on, but old temptations recede.

Verse 19.

Moses essays to go with wife and children, taking the rod of God in his hand, the symbol of his Divine commission and power, and he is told to show before Pharaoh the signs already described, but he is forewarned that Pharaoh will resist. *I will harden his heart,*

Verse 20.

said the Lord, *and he will not let the people go*, that is, what the Lord will do will provoke the king to wrathful obstinacy, and he will resist to the uttermost. So do men say that God afflicts them when their own wilfulness brings misery upon them, and so do they attribute to God's purpose all the evil results of their own wrong doing, and curse Him.

Verse 21.

Moses was told to speak to Pharaoh in this way : *Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my first-born ; and I have said unto thee,*

Verses 22, 23.

Let my son go that he may serve me ; and thou hast refused to let him go ; behold, I will slay thy son, thy first-born. Israel is called the first-born son because, as compared with other nations, Israel had been chosen to be the people to whom God revealed Himself by giving the law to Moses. Not that it was a larger or nobler race, but that it would exactly perform the representative rites, and would preserve the Scriptures carefully, was it chosen to this high office, and so it stood above other nations in its capacity of service to man, if it would do its work faithfully. It was for Egypt to obey God, not to defy Him, and that defiance, which was foreseen, would cost Egypt its first-born because by disobedience the natural destroys true life. "The wages of sin is death."¹ The Lord's disciple must follow Him to

¹ ROMANS vi. 23.

life, ever more abundantly, while the dead buries its dead.¹

As the journey began with wife and sons Moses was suddenly stopped : his own first-born was ill.

His wife, knowing what was wrong
Verses 24-26.

in them, circumcised the stricken son and said in reproach, *A husband of blood art thou to me*, meaning that he had delayed too long the rite for all Israelites, the rite of purification corresponding to baptism. Already the lack of faith on Moses' part has been seen, and again it will appear, even until he proves unworthy to enter the promised land. This shows great need of discipline, so that he would go on his errand very humbly. He had long held back and now was going on impulsively and needed at once this unmistakably sharp reminder to do only God's will.

With the sense of reproof upon him Moses leaves his family in Midian and goes on alone, nor can he have their comforting company until the

¹ MATTHEW viii. 22.

hard work in Egypt has been done, when they will all come to meet and bless him. He must give up something at present as the Lord said that, unless a man would leave all to follow Him, that man could not be His disciple, and again that what a man left behind for that cause he should have again a hundredfold.¹ So Moses was met and chastened, as Balaam was met on his way, and as all Israel was circumcised at Gilgal after it had tarried forty years in the same wilderness.²

As Moses went alone on his way Aaron came out, led by the Lord, *and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him, and Moses*
Verses 27, 28. *told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him and all the signs which He had commanded him.* So does the Scripture open itself to a rational faith ; they kiss each other in one spirit, and take up their common work. There is a dogmatism which closes the Word, and buries it, and seals the stone, and there is a sweet and

¹ MATTHEW xix. 29. ² JOSHUA v. 2-6.

reasonable doctrine of light and life which goes forth to receive revelation and be at one with it.

So from the mount of God, the highest in man, do revelation and interpretation go hand in hand

to all Israel. *The people believed the*
Verses 29-31. *words and the signs, that the Lord*

had visited them and had seen their affliction, and they bowed their heads and worshipped, an attitude of the soul when the light of truth has shone upon it making the night light about it, as it was to the shepherds of Bethlehem, and it can say, "In Thy light I see light.¹ I shall not die, but live. It is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes."²

As Moses came out of the desert back to his home, ready now to be Israel's deliverer, so our Lord returned from the wilderness of forty days' trial "into Galilee in the power of the spirit, and His fame went through all the region round about, and He taught in their synagogues, being glorified

¹ PSALM xxxvi. 9. ² PSALM cxviii. 17, 23.

of all ;” and His teaching was “to read, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor, to set at liberty them that are bruised,” and then to say, “To-day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.”¹ Thus Moses and Aaron were joined in Him, and so in the Sermon on the Mount He first gave the words of the Law and then added the interpretation, and many times He did this, especially at His resurrection when He began at “Moses and all the prophets and expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”² In His Second Coming as well, this is His work as the Spirit of Truth, to open the Scriptures, not in the flesh, but spiritually, so that His own power may be again exerted in the Moses and Aaron, the revelation of old and its farther opening for final Christianity.

¹ LUKE iv. 14-21. ² LUKE xxiv. 27.

DEMAND AND REFUSAL.

There are two great forces in the world, the one of God, the other of man. The former is self-existing and infinite, the latter derivative and finite. The one is creative and active, the other is comparatively receptive and passive; yet it is by no means merely passive, it is a reactive force. All that is created must be relatively passive to that which creates it, but as life ascends in the scale from the lowest forms up to man, the positive reactive power increases, until in man there is the ability to use or to abuse the power given to him by God. A good human being is one who acknowledges his relation to the Lord of all life and seeks in obedience and cooperation to fulfil the plan of the Almighty. An evil man resists being led by the Lord and seeks absolute independence in wilfulness. He exercises his human prerogative to his own serious injury. So far as in him lies, he creates disorder in the universe and is a barrier

to the Divine work. Yet all the time the Lord is seeking nothing else than the eternal welfare of all; and if men hate God and His will, the saying is fulfilled, "For my love they are my adversaries."¹

As regards Israel, it was the Divine plan to give that nation a country for itself and to make it a means of restoring order to a region in which evil, increasing to almost incredible degrees of inhumanity, had come to prevail. The slaughter of children in sacrifice to false gods and constant wars of extermination were depopulating it. As had been foreseen and promised to the patriarchs, it was to be given to Israel. But now, as so often in human history, men, blind to their own good and seeking only for arrogant freedom, opposed themselves to the Divine plan, and resisted it to the uttermost; with what result may be seen in the Book of the Exodus, as it is seen in all such lives now. "God is not mocked,"² wisely said

¹ PSALM cix. 4. ² GALATIANS vi. 7.

the apostle ; and we read in a Psalm of Asaph, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee, the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain."¹

The evil man is here Pharaoh ; he is the lower nature seeking to rule or else ruin the higher, which desires to do the Divine will. Moses and Aaron represent the Lord as His messengers of the Divine Law and its interpretation. Israel has heard the promise of God and accepts it with hope. Moses and Aaron then say to Pharaoh :

Thus saith the Lord, God of Israel,
Verse 1. *Let my people go, that they may hold*

a feast to me in the wilderness. Israel cannot worship God in the land, for that is not allowed ; it will go over the border and celebrate its allegiance to God. How little a thing for the king to grant ! But he sees here the thin edge of a wedge which will deliver Israel from him. *Who*

is the Lord that I should obey His
Verse 2. *voice to let Israel go ? I know not*
the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.

¹ PSALM lxxvi. 10.

Moses and Aaron persist: *The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness,*
Verse 3. *and sacrifice unto the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.* They had the common thought of God as easily provoked to anger, and He must let Himself be so thought of in that day, but there lies here a serious truth, namely, that if men do not go out and worship, leaving the service of the flesh at times for the nurture of the spirit, they will suffer harm. It is as when our Lord said to the Pharisees, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life."¹

BURDENS INCREASED.

But Pharaoh answered, *Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, loose the people from their works? Get you unto your burdens.* Heavy burdens indeed when the flesh controls,
Verse 4. and the spirit has no sabbath! So the Pharisees

¹ JOHN V. 40.

bound heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders.¹ So they laid on the Saviour the burden of the cross,² and He that was so innocent bore our griefs and carried our sorrows³

And Pharaoh went on to say, *Behold the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens*; and he gave

Verses 5-7.

orders to the taskmasters, *Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore; let them go and gather straw for themselves.*

This meant a great increase of toil. The straw had been brought from the threshing-floors, so that it was readily mixed with the Nile mud to give more coherence to the bricks, which were about two feet square and a few inches thick. Of this better sort of bricks Pithom was built, and they still exist. The new order was that the people must go about and gather stubble out of the fields to use as straw. Moreover Pharaoh

¹ MATTHEW xxiii. 4. ² JOHN xix. 17. ³ ISAIAH liii. 4.

expressly said, *The tale of bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them ; ye shall not diminish aught thereof : for they be idle ; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let heavier work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein ; and let them not regard lying words.*

Verses 8, 9.

That is it. The words of God are a lie. Life is not to be spiritual. There is no spirit. Life is only of the body. God is only a force. Therefore let me seize upon all things while they last and make them serve my lusts for gold and power ; men, women, and children, what are they but mine to enjoy ? and “after me, the deluge,” said Louis XV. So reasons in blind rage the natural man incensed at the voice of conscience. He will crucify the Saviour, and will stand by and rail on Him, mocking His prayerful hope. No straw for Israel means not the least help by the flesh to the spirit — no mercy, no pity. There is a worldliness which does not forget the poor and has some feeling for the innocent who will suffer

rather than do wrong. But in this Egyptian hardness there is only hate and derision, as we read, "Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none."¹

And so the *taskmasters* sent forth the cruel word, and so *the people were scattered abroad to gather stubble instead of straw*, and so
Verses 10-14. *the taskmasters hasted them*, and so *the officers or foremen of Israel were beaten and demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task both yesterday and to-day in making brick, as heretofore?* Just this was Pharaoh's purpose. He would so oppress them that they could not think of God. With Joseph sold into Egypt to be put into prison there, his brethren might well say: "We shall see what will become of his dreams."² With the two witnesses lying dead in the street of the city spiritually called Sodom and Egypt,

¹ PSALM lxix. 20. ² GENESIS xxxvii. 20.

the people rejoiced and made merry and sent gifts one to another.¹

An appeal was made in all truth. *The officers who had been beaten came and cried unto Pharaoh, Wherefore dealest thou thus with thy*

Verses 15, 16.

servants? There is no straw given unto thy servants, and they say to us, Make brick, but the fault is in thine own people. Did this move him? Was Nero moved to see a Christian maiden thrown to a lion? Nay, it was good sport. He would have his holiday. So Pharaoh in every man knows no compassion; and he said: Ye are

Verses 17, 18.

idle, ye are idle; therefore ye say, Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord. Go ye therefore and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

¹ REVELATION xi. 8, 10.

DESPAIR OF ISRAEL.

What wonder is it that, when the officers came out from that audience, and *met Moses and Aaron*

who stood in the way as they came
Verses 20, 21. *forth, they said, The Lord look upon*

you and judge; because ye have made our savour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to slay us. This is despair. It is the Lord cry-

ing out: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour."¹

And it is only despair which leads one not to look to himself but upward, even as the Lord added:

"But for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify Thy name."¹ So did the nature in Him born of woman gain the victory. But

Israel had only the beginning of faith. It was as a man who tries to do right, but finds his life straightened by increasing temptation. He is

¹ JOHN xii. 27, 28.

tempted to turn upon his conscience as these officers did upon Moses and Aaron. It is Job's wife saying, "Curse God and die."¹ It is Job himself repeating to reject it, "the counsel of the wicked."²

Then Moses took up the complaint; *Lord, why hast Thou evil entreated this people? why is it that*

Verses 22, 23.

Thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Thy name, he hath evil entreated this people. Neither hast Thou delivered Thy people at all. This early and easy discouragement of Moses is truly human. No one entering on a new life foresees the difficulties of it. He is soon weary and justifies himself in view of the failure of God to assist him. Israel is of little faith, and is often saying: "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed away from my God."³

¹ JOB ii. 9. ² *Ibid.* xxi. 16. ³ ISAIAH xl. 27.

GOD'S PROMISE RENEWED.

Of course the Lord, knowing what is in man, expected all this in Pharaoh and in Moses, and

CHAPTER VI. He knew what He would do: *Now*

Verse 1. *thou shalt see what I will do to Pharaoh, for by a strong hand shall he let them go, and by a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.* What is so absurd as to say, "God cannot save," and thus to limit the Holy One of Israel, mighty to save?

God spoke to Moses, *I am the Lord*; and that is precisely what men forget, both the evil and the good. Moses always spoke to

Verse 2. God as if He were to be rebuked for indifference or won over by persuasion. The only answer to all such unwisdom is, *I am the Lord*, or, as it is said in one place: "Be still and know that I am God."¹ And here it is told that

¹ PSALM xlv. 10.

God said also to Moses that He had appeared to
Abraham and Isaac and Jacob as
Verse 3. God Almighty, but not as Jehovah.

This name is now revealed because God will make
known more fully His love and forbearance and
pity, as well as His great power. He then re-
news the patriarchal covenant, re-
Verses 4-6. peats the promise of the land of
Canaan, and once more declares that He knows
the bondage of Israel and will put an end to it.

I will take you to me for a people, and
Verse 7. *I will be to you a God.* There is no
other purpose of the Divine. It is to bless all if
they will permit, to pour out of Itself upon them
to the degree that they are willing and so able to
receive. Yielding to God means eternal growth
in good.

But there is something which man must know :
Ye shall know that I am your God, who bringeth
you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.
It is not enough to know God as one who lives,
He must be known as the personal Saviour. He

is not content to reign only, in His love He is the Good Shepherd ; and so He said also : *I will*

Verse 8.

bring you into the land concerning which I lifted up my hand to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob ; and I will give it you for an heritage ; I am the Lord. Thus He becomes the Lord of any man by no claim of power, but by fulfilling to each faithful soul its destiny, and then He is its Lord by bestowing freely on it the blessings promised, the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. To whom did the Lord promise thrones ? To those who had continued with Him in His temptations,¹ for "these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."²

This answer Moses brought back to the people, *but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage.* So do

Verse 9.

present trials hide the grand issue of them ; as Elijah prayed the Lord to take away

¹ LUKE xxii. 28, 30. ² REVELATION xiv. 4.

his life,¹ as Jeremiah said : "God hath deceived me, I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me ; wherefore came I forth to see labour and sorrow, that my days should be consumed with shame ?"²

But the Lord does not yield.

Verse 11.

Moses must go again and speak to Pharaoh *that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.* And Moses pleaded,

Verse 13.

but God's *charge* was not recalled.

HIS CHOSEN MEN.

The story at this point seems to suffer an unnecessary interruption. Genealogies are given, and they seem out of place and of no spiritual value. But look again. Only three of Jacob's sons are mentioned, and they are the three eldest,

Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. As all
Verses 14-25.

the tribes represent all classes of religious people, these three sons stand for those

¹ KINGS xix. 4. ² JEREMIAH xx. 7, 18.

first developed — Reuben, “the son of sight,” for those who know; Simeon, “hearing,” for those who obey knowledge; and Levi, “conjunction,” for those who by knowing and doing are joined to the Lord. And this enumeration of families, especially of Levi, shows that development of the soul which produces, under God, Moses and Aaron, the Word of God in its interpretation and application, by which the will of the Lord is brought to pass in man. Having given the enu-

meration, the Scripture adds, *These*

Verses 26-30.

are that Moses and Aaron to whom the Lord said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their hosts. These are they who spake to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron. To those who see in the occasional repetitions of statement the evidence of more than one original document, nothing need be said, for it is of no spiritual consequence whether there was one document or many. The history may be a mosaic, but it is

historically true of the past, and spiritually true of all time, and thus the Word of God is "forever settled in heaven."¹

It is easy to see that, by the first failure with Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron have been discredited before him and their countrymen, but not so before God, and the history goes back a little to show that they are the appointed ones who shall yet prevail. It is an eternal call, *Let my people go*. Out of the slavery of the flesh to the spirit, every man is called. One refusal of the flesh to yield is as nothing. The increased burden of the suffering spirit is needed to make it abhor the land of its bondage. Israel and every man must know the deadly conflict. Despair must teach the soul to say, as Hadad said to another Pharaoh, "Let me depart that I may go to mine own country;" and when Pharaoh urged him to stay he said, "Howbeit in any wise let me depart."²

¹ PSALM cxix. 89. ² I KINGS xi. 21, 22.

DIVINE PERSISTENCE.

It is only by repeated efforts that the Divine in a man, the Moses and Aaron, can gather strength

CHAPTER
VII.

to do the work of rescue and salvation. Therefore, this first defeat and disaster called only for a renewed attempt to over-

Verses 1, 2.

come Pharaoh, and *the Lord said to Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.* As Pharaoh's obstinacy increases, the power of Moses and Aaron shall rise in even more rapid degree. They shall "go from strength to strength,"¹ and this, feeble and of little faith though they are, by the patience of the Lord; as the Psalmist said, "Thy gentleness hath made me great."²

¹ PSALM lxxxiv. 7. ² PSALM xviii. 35.

When the Lord declares, *I will harden Pharaoh's heart*, we have the customary speech regarding man's sin, that it is the act

Verse 3.

of God, but this is only the appearance. Divine foresight saw the increasing disobedience of the king and the judgments which he would bring upon himself—*my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt*, so that, after a fearful struggle of hardened man against the all-

Verses 4, 5.

merciful God, Israel would come forth. Then Egypt would know God, as the evil spirit cried out to the Saviour, "I know Thee who Thou art;"¹ then Israel would know the Lord who had graven them on the palms of His hands.²

This growth through discipline of Moses and Aaron is meant by the saying that Moses was

Verse 7.

now *eighty* and Aaron *eighty-three years old*, for all through the Scripture the number forty signifies discipline—Israel's forty years in the wilderness, the Lord's

¹ MARK i. 24. ² ISAIAH xlix. 16.

forty days of temptation, the forty stripes of punishment for reformation ;¹ and eighty doubles the number and intensifies its force. It is interesting to note that Aaron, although the elder, was subordinated to Moses, who is the *god* to Pharaoh while Aaron is the *prophet*; but this occurs very often, as with Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Manasseh and Ephraim, James and John. The saying that "the elder shall serve the younger"² means that, in the regenerating life, a later state is more truly spiritual than a former one—the first man Adam is a living soul, the last Adam a quickening spirit.³

The Lord thus perfects His work slowly. So the Lord Jesus knew what it was to be derided and discredited as a Nazarene and friend of publicans and sinners, but He would not cease: "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day."⁴ "My Father worketh hitherto,

¹ DEUTERONOMY xxv. 3. ² GENESIS xxv. 23. ³ I CORINTHIANS xv. 45. ⁴ JOHN ix. 4.

and I work.”¹ The disciples were amazed: “The Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?” and His answer was, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?”² Again and again He goes to the Pharaoh in a man saying, *Let my people go*, and leads them by living fountains of waters out of great tribulation to serve God day and night in His temple.³

WARNING REJECTED.

“Evil punishes itself,” is a dictum⁴ which on reflection every one will see to be true. Putting the hand in fire one may say that the fire punished him, but the fire only went on with its proper work; running against a tree one may say that the tree punished him, but it only stood in its place; committing a crime one may say that the law punished him, but the law only defined the order of the community; breaking any rule of righteous living one may say that God pun-

¹ JOHN v. 17. ² JOHN xi. 8, 9. ³ REVELATION vii. 14-17.

⁴ “Arcana,” 696.

ishes him, but the truth is that with unchanging fidelity Divine order maintains itself. In this world and in the other, for both are in the realm of Divine truth, sin punishes itself, and every infraction of universal order holds its own penalty. "We wear the yoke of our own wrong-doing," says Daniel Deronda. So, be it said once for all, as to Pharaoh, when it is written that God *hardened his heart*; for God hardens no man's heart and punishes no one. This is the appearance, as with the fire or the tree or the law; yet every man punishes himself.

In speaking of the plagues or punishments which fell on Egypt, it is important always to view them in their order and to note that so may any man injure himself, who sets himself again and again to resist the Divine will, which seeks only the good of the whole man, both spiritual and natural. To let Israel go would have been an act of wisdom; to hate and increasingly to oppress Israel is in all ages a self-destructive course, since the sinner draws upon himself penalty after penalty until he yields at last in com-

plete subjection to the Divine order, which would have blessed if permitted.

At first only a sign was given, doing no injury to Pharaoh. *Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it*

Verses 8-12.

became a serpent. This is the shepherd's staff which had done the same for Moses himself¹ as a sign of what results when power is abused, namely, that it becomes dangerous and destructive. But Moses had been convinced; not so the king: *He called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did so with their enchantments: for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.*

The magic of Egypt misled the king to believe that he had by his servants all the power of a god. There is magical power, and it seems to many marvellous, so that they make a religion of spiritistic phenomena, the magic of to-day. Ever since men knew the correspondence of things

¹ Chapter iv. 1-5.

spiritual and natural, have they been tempted to make use of their knowledge for occult purposes of priestcraft and gain. But the wise are not misled by mere magic, for they will keep their faith in God, calling no man father on earth,¹ and rebuking such perversions, as Peter rebuked the sorcerer Simon.²

Aaron's rod as a serpent swallowed up the others, showing that evil has little power compared with the power of good; as evil spirits cried out, "Let us alone; art thou come to destroy us?" when the Redeemer healed their victim of Capernaum.³

NATURE OF THE PLAGUES.

But the king was not moved. His heart was
hardened; he refused to let the people
Verse 14.
go.

As the land of Egypt and its history have been closely studied, the nature of the afflictions which

¹ MATTHEW xxiii. 8. ² ACTS viii. 20. ³ LUKE iv. 34.

now are told is well understood. They followed with intervals the course of the year, each one having its place when ordinary conditions made room for it, as in the case of the first, which belonged to the time of the high Nile, about June.

Not only was the order natural as well as significant, but every one of these plagues was in the eyes of the Egyptians a defeat of some one of their deities who was supposed to have the protection of the river, the harvest, the cattle or the first born, as the case might be. One other fact is to be noted : the plagues came in pairs, though successively — fôul water and frogs, lice and flies, murrain on cattle and boils on men, hail and locusts, darkness and death — and this means that both parts of the mind are injured in turn, first the understanding and then the will, as falsity and evil result from sin. Thus the pairing of expressions, like “joy and gladness, justice and judgment,” seen also in the Divine names, enters into this account as well.

WATER MADE BLOOD.

Moses and Aaron were now told to meet the king *in the morning: lo, he goeth out unto the water.* At the time of high Nile

Verses 15-18.

when all the land was receiving its annual blessing of fertility, the river was especially worshipped as the emanation of Osiris. Then when the king was by the river he was to be given again the request to let Israel go; and if he still refused, it was to be said, *The waters shall be turned to blood, and the fish shall die, and the river shall stink, and the Egyptians shall loathe to drink water from the river.* This would be as the water began to recede. In pools infusoria would be formed, and as they died and putrified, the water would become most foul and repulsive. This is truth turned to falsity like the serpent's word in Eden that, knowing good and evil, they would be as God and would not surely die, but would have their eyes opened.¹

¹ GENESIS iii. 4, 5.

So it was done, and over all the water came the hue of crimson, and they could not drink without loathing. But again the king called

Verses 19-22.

upon his *magicians*, and they *did so with their enchantments*; and, seeing this done at his bidding, the king's heart renewed its pride and he *did not hearken, as the Lord had said*. There is, as will presently appear, a limit beyond which sorcery could not go, but it could go so far; at least it appeared so to the king; and the Lucifer in a man does not submit to correction while his power is full, but he says, "I

will be like the Most High." ¹ How

Verse 23.

vividly this is expressed in the words, *Pharaoh turned and went into his house!* It is the resort to self, the magnifying of self-life; as it is written of the Pharisees, who met together and declared that they would not believe on Jesus, "for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet," and then "went every man to his own house," while the rejected One went to a place of opposite significance, "the mount of Olives." ²

¹ ISAIAH xiv. 14. ² JOHN vii. 52, 53; viii. 1.

For *seven days* the people endured this plague, representing a full period of affliction, and they dug wells in the sand, seeking to escape the evil, but not by the true and manly way of repentance.

Verses 24, 25.

FROGS.

Closely joined with this came the next plague, the *frogs*, bred from the stagnant pools. There was as always ample warning: *The river shall swarm with frogs, which shall go up and come into thine house, and into thy bedchamber, and upon thy bed, and into the house of thy servants and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading troughs.* So it was done: *the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.*

Here the goddess Heka, always represented with a frog's head, was put to shame. The frogs leaping and croaking followed after some weeks the putrid water to signify that second stage of false thinking when men send their insidious

reasonings everywhere, defiling the home and degrading character, as the Pharisees did when they said, "He hath a devil and is mad; He casteth out devils by Beelzebub,"¹ thereby invading the houses of the poor, the synagogue and the temple courts with reasonings false and foul, like the three frogs seen in Patmos.²

Again *the magicians* succeeded in doing something like, but the king was moved by fear, and he said to Moses and Aaron, *Intreat the Lord to take away the frogs from me and from my people, and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice unto the Lord.*

Verses 7, 8.

This yielding was received by Moses with eagerness: *Have thou this glory over me*, means that Moses, really victorious, is ready to serve him; and he asks for further instruction from the king, as to when it shall be done. *To-morrow*, answered the king; and Moses said, *Be it according to thy word, that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the*

Verses 9-14.

¹ JOHN x. 20; LUKE xi. 15. ² REVELATION xvi. 13.

Lord our God, and he went on to promise that all the frogs would die except in the river. Then Moses and Aaron went out and besought the Lord, *and the Lord did according to the word of Moses.*

How easily are men forgiven by Him who is "merciful and gracious!"¹ How quickly does the course of things become prosperous when men repent! No sooner has the prodigal returning come in sight of home, than his father runs to greet him; no sooner does he begin to confess his great faults, than his father calls for the robe and the ring and the feast of great joy!² Even so not one of Pharaoh's evil deeds will be reckoned against him, if he really repents.

But alas, for him and all such, *when he saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart and hearkened not, as the Lord had said.*

Verse 15.

The Lord had said so because He knew Pharaoh and every man. In the stress of pain and penalty due to no one but themselves,

¹ EXODUS xxxiv. 6. ² LUKE xv. 20, 23.

men promise everything, but true repentance must be wrought out in liberty, not in duress, as a thousand instances show plainly. The frogs gone, Pharaoh's mind was changed.

THE LICE.

The third plague was of *lice*, of the land rather than of the water. This marks a deeper injury to the life. It was perhaps in October
Verses 16, 17. that the dried earth or *dust became lice in man and in beast*, as the graphic expression is; the very sand was so mingled with the insects that the two seemed one *throughout all the land*. Sensual evils are meant — the low, vile ways of filthy loves, the next step downward in a sinful career.

What now of *the magicians*? They tried to bring forth lice, but they could not, and they said
unto Pharaoh, *It is the finger of God*.

Verses 18, 19. This was an Egyptian way of speaking. None knew better than they that their limit

was reached. From this time they were on Moses' side. So Simon Magus asked to be baptized,¹ and Balaam, called to curse, blessed Israel with the blessings of God.² In passing from water to land the signs had gone beyond the power of magic to imitate. In things intellectual such abuses may exist, but when the scene changes from thought to life, from the shifting waters to the solid earth, no magic avails.

THE FLIES.

Once more, in spite of the yielding of the magicians, the king rejects God, and the next

woe follows, *the swarms of flies*
Verses 20, 21.

stinging, poisoning. Every one who has been in Egypt knows their power. It was now Isis, queen of the air, who was conquered; and everywhere the swarms flew, upon the king and his people, until *the houses were full of them and also the ground*. The meaning is of yet more malignant evils preying upon the mind like flies.

¹ACTS viii. 13. ²NUMBERS xxiv. 10.

One marked difference now is shown. In Goshen, the northeastern district occupied by the Israelites, there were no flies.

Verse 23.

Thus it was a sign of double power, and such were the signs following. The Lord said, *I will put a division between my people and thy people: and the Lord did so.* It is clearly so in all lands; as people advance upon their roads upwards or downwards, the distinction, at first not manifest, becomes very plain; their paths, at first apparently parallel, diverge widely and more and more, until the sensualism of one is wholly unknown to another. To Rome the Lord was dumb, so that Pilate marvelled,¹ and the reason is plain enough.

Urgently now the king *called for Moses and Aaron, and he said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.* But this letting go to

Verses 25-27.

still hold on is impossible. Moses said, *It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice*

¹ MARK xv. 5.

the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes ; and will they not stone us ? True worship cannot be rendered in subjection to the flesh, which will repress it as hateful. No, Israel must go three days' journey into the wilderness. There, where the mind has really entered on its way to the mount of God, it can freely "sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,"¹ but not before then.

To this the stricken king said, I will let you go that ye may sacrifice in the wilderness ; only ye shall not go very far away. Again

Verses 28-32.

he is temporizing, but again the Divine mercy will revoke the plague, only let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the Lord. And this warning was given because every time that a man mocks God, he does himself a deadly injury. The plague was stayed, but the king was false this time also.

¹ PSALM cvii. 22.

THE MURRAIN.

Then came warning of the *very grievous murrain* or cattle-sickness, sometimes in a degree

CHAPTER IX. now known in Egypt about Decem-

Verses 1-7.

ber. It came upon cattle, horses, asses, camels, sheep and goats; and they *died*, but of the cattle of the children of Israel died not one. The king sent to see if this was so, and then *was stubborn*, as before.

THE BOILS.

Then came as companion to the cattle plague that of *boils upon man and beast*. Ashes of the furnace Moses sprinkled toward

Verses 8-12.

heaven, signifying that hearts like the king's are consumed with base passion; and that, when they are spread before heaven, their vileness comes to judgment, as in the Book of Revelation when the angel's bowl was poured

upon the beast, "pains and sores" resulted.¹ The *magicians* were smitten like the rest, powerless now one and all, burning with the carbuncles of passions corrupted with vile loves. Even now the king resisted still.

THE HAIL.

So came on a long warning, God showing that He doth not willingly afflict,² and the king was urged to protect his cattle from the
Verses 13-26. coming *hail*. And some among his *servants feared the word of the Lord* and made people and cattle *flee into the houses*, but others *regarded not*. This shows the repentance not only of magicians but of others, the remnant delivered from the final judgment at the eleventh hour, "ere the lamp went out."³ Then came *thunder and hail, and the fire ran down upon the earth, such as it had not been in all the land of*

¹ REVELATION xvi. 11. ² LAMENTATIONS iii. 33. ³ 1 SAMUEL iii. 3.

Egypt since it became a nation ; and it smote all that was in the field, man and beast, every herb and every tree ; only in the land of Goshen where the children of Israel were, was there no hail. Here is shown, not the injury merely, but the destruction of mind by persistent sinfulness. This is its first stage.

Pharaoh's word now was, *I have sinned this time ; intreat the Lord, and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.* And Moses

Verses 27-35.

said yes at once, but he added, *I know that ye will not yet fear the Lord God.* Through the fields he went where *the flax and barley were smitten, but not the wheat and spelt for they were not grown.* This would be in February. Alas that it must be written that, when the hail ceased, *Pharaoh sinned yet more and hardened his heart.*

THE LOCUSTS.

Thus the eighth plague must follow, the *locusts*, again with a full but ineffective warning,

CHAPTER X. although some Egyptians urged

Verses 1-11. Pharaoh to yield, and he did recall the brothers and demanded, *Who are they that shall go?* but to their reply that all must go, he answered that only *the men* might go, and the two *were driven out from Pharaoh's presence*. When Moses and Aaron, when the influence of the Lord over and in man, is altogether driven out, is it not the sin against the Holy Ghost?¹

An east wind blew upon the land *all day and all night*, and it brought the locusts. *Very grievous*

Verses 12-15. *were they. There remained not any green thing.* Here is the further

destructiveness of sin that all aspirations for good cease.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste,

¹ MATTHEW xii. 31.

and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. Forgive my sin only this once, and intreat the Lord your God that He may take away from me this death only. As before, there was no vindictiveness, and the west wind took up the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea. But the lesson was in vain, and the king was obdurate still.

THE DARKNESS.

The ninth plague was *darkness*, that terror of Egypt when the air is filled with sand, *a darkness which may be felt.* For three days they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place, but all the children of Israel had light. So the great sun-god Ra was put to shame. So was typified that darkness of the mind when it closes itself to truth, and "hateth the light, neither cometh to the light,"¹ but one "stumbles at noon day as in the night and is in desolate places as dead."²

¹ JOHN iii. 20. ² ISAIAH lix. 10.

The king yielded : *Go ye, serve the Lord, only let your flocks and your herds be stayed ;* but the

Verses 24-26.

answer of course was that they must have animals for *sacrifice and burnt offering*. Without the consecration of all the powers to the service of the Lord there can be no spiritual life. Lip-service will not suffice. A heart without an altar of love is sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.¹ "Faith without works is dead."² The tree must bear its fruit or die.³

When the king turned again in his wrath to defy God, he said to Moses, *Get thee from me,*

Verses 27, 28.

take heed to thyself, see my face no more, for in the day thou seest my face thou shalt die. Confirmed evil slays its Saviour with mockery, buries Him, and seals the stone. "His blood be on us and on our children," it cries.⁴ And the Lord in tears over Jerusalem could only say, "Your house is left unto you desolate."⁵

¹ I CORINTHIANS xiii. 1. ² JAMES ii. 20. ³ MATTHEW xxi. 19.

⁴ MATTHEW xxvii. 25. ⁵ MATTHEW xxiii. 38.

Thou hast spoken well, said Moses, *I will see thy face again no more*; and thus the king by

Verse 29.

his own overt act, at the end of a long course of folly and sin, condemned himself to the outer darkness of a life hating the light, a life stopping its ears to the appeal of God and the angels, who speak in love, "This is the way, walk ye in it,"¹ but are answered with scorn. *No more*; so it was said of Babylon, no more of the harper, no more of the craftsman, no more of the millstone, no more of the candle, no more of the bridegroom and bride, for in it was found the blood of prophets whom it had slain upon the earth.²

For love, so oft cast out, comes back

No more again, no more;

It spake what e'en to memory now,

Returns no more, no more.³

¹ ISAIAH xxx. 21. ² REVELATION xviii. 22-24. ³ After A. H. Clough.

THE FIRSTBORN SLAIN.

The terrible year of affliction for Egypt drew to its close. Egypt had caused Israel to suffer all this time, but Egypt had suffered more, and this not from any deeds of Israel, but from its own perverseness. Step by step misery had come upon the king and his people as they with equal step moved against God and His purpose to give Israel justice. Downward fell Egypt as it strengthened itself in resistance until, like the herd of Gadara,¹ it leaped to death.

The Lord had said unto Moses, Yet one more plague will I bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt, afterwards he will let you go hence; when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether. Not only the hardness of heart had been foreseen, but the final yielding with urgency that Israel go out.

¹ MATTHEW viii. 32.

Here is consolation for the troubled soul, oppressed by its own evils like so many masters, that at last by the mercy of the Lord and its patient fidelity to Him, the prison doors shall open and the oppressed go free out of the furnace of iron on the road to holy ground.

But first the command to spoil the Egyptians is repeated,¹ for the time has come to *ask for*

Verse 2.

gold and silver. Again an encouraging word, that every affliction endured in faith makes room for some blessing of love and light, the oil of joy for mourning.

Verse 3.

When it is added that at this time *Moses was very great in the land,* the meaning is of the final reign of righteousness overcoming the world where sin causes so much tribulation.²

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again,
The eternal years of God are hers;
But error wounded writhes with pain,
And dies among his worshippers.³

¹ Chapter iii. 21, 22. ² JOHN xvi. 33. ³ W. C. Bryant.

The text goes back now to the final words of Moses to the king before he went out from his presence. *And Moses said, Thus*

Verses 4, 5.

saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of cattle. In the firstborn is the hope of the future, and therefore this death will mark the end of continuance in power. There is a Divine limit, and it has been reached. Egypt would have slain all the babes of Israel, but it was prevented, and now its power ends after being so long misused. "I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree, yet he passed away and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."¹ So speaks the Psalm, and our Lord expressed the same fact by weeping over the self-doomed Jerusalem.²

¹ PSALM xxxvii. 35, 36. ² LUKE xix. 41.

This plague of pestilence would go from the king to his humblest servant turning the stone hand-mill, and even to the cattle, to signify that there is no degree of evil great or small which does not come under the same law of limitation. Otherwise there would be no salvation of souls

anywhere. And Moses went on to
Verses 6, 7. say that *a great cry, such as there*

hath been none like it nor shall be like it any more, would be heard; but that *against any of the children of Israel not a dog* would bark. This is the eternal contrast of the peace of God and the weeping and gnashing of teeth of confirmed
evil arrayed against religion. And

Verse 8. Moses ended with predicting that then all Egypt would *bow down* to him, *saying, Get thee out and all the people that follow thee,* and then, said he, *I will go out;* and he left Pharaoh *in anger.* Moses' impatience, which appears often, finally debarring him from entering the Promised Land, still has its meaning as to the Lord, for His infinite love of souls may

seem a zeal of wrath to those who do not love Him, when it is in reality without the least vindictiveness.

During all these months nothing is said of Israel but that the plagues did not fall upon them. Many times no doubt deliverance seemed to be near, but as often were they disappointed. Their duty was of patience and trust until these calamities were overpassed,¹ but now they must act with haste and zeal.

THE PASSOVER.

This month shall be unto you the beginning of months ; it shall be the first month of the year to

CHAPTER XII. *you. In the tenth day of this month*

Verses 1-6.

they shall take to them every man a lamb, a lamb for a household. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year ; ye shall take from the sheep or from the goats ; and ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the

¹ PSALM lvii. 1.

month; and the whole assembly shall kill it between the evenings.

That month of Abib, to which they had now come, the month of Spring flowers, must hereafter begin the sacred year, for the national birthday was in reality one with the exodus. So the true, the spiritual life begins in a Spring of hope and light, and men must be kept mindful of it or they will not remain true to their Saviour. Like disciples called by the Lord, like Paul amazed on his road, like the woman whom Satan had bound these many years, so Israel on this day began to live anew indeed. And how was the new life to open? Every family if large enough, or otherwise two jointly, must select a perfect lamb on the tenth day and keep it apart until the fourteenth, on which day the moon would be full. The lamb, so often used in sacrifice, typifies innocence, a living purpose to do only good. So the Lord was the Lamb of God, and on the tenth day of the month He entered Jerusalem as a king willing to be offered in sacrifice.

If they had no lamb they might take a goat, which represents a less perfect innocence. And if they were too few, they must join two families, representing degrees of strength, all the weaker being helped by union. The tenth day stands for the quickening of all that has been stored within a man from childhood of good states of life. If there were ten righteous persons in Sodom it could be saved,¹ and every Israelite must bring the tenths to God² as representative of the consecrated life. To keep the lamb apart until the fourteenth day is to exalt innocence until a twofold and perfect Sabbath is reached. Then the offering must be made between the evenings. This apparently trivial detail illustrates the value of every word which no loose translation must be suffered to obscure. The Hebrews like the Greeks had two evenings, the first when the shadows lengthened, the second at sunset, when the next day began.

¹ GENESIS xviii. 32. ² LEVITICUS xxvii. 32.

The first evening would stand for the declining day, the second for the coming day, and between lies that state when fear gives way to hope. It was at that hour that the Lamb was slain on Calvary.¹ It was at that hour that the pass-over, symbol of salvation, was killed every year in Israel.

We further read, *They shall take of the blood and put it on the two side posts and on the lintel, upon the houses where they shall eat it.* Thus they would make all the place holy even to the door, as in a life where all its going out and coming in will be marked with its innocence, its truthfulness in service.

The lamb must be *roasted* and must be eaten with *unleavened bread and bitter herbs*: it must not be eaten *raw* nor *sodden with water* (boiled), but *roast with fire, head, legs and inward parts*. And it must be eaten *in that night*, with *nothing to remain until*

¹ MARK XV. 34-42.

morning, but the bones would be burned in the morning. The roasting stands for the quality of love essential to a holy life. The lamb must not be eaten raw, a type of the natural, unpurified life; nor cooked in water, as if doctrine prevailed rather than life. The unleavened bread signifies as is presently shown the ardor of movement, but especially the exclusion of selfish, human taint, and the impulse received and acted upon as it came from God. The bitter herbs must be eaten to typify that all such supreme acts of faith give some pain of true discipline to the soul.

The manner of eating was with *loins girded, shoes on feet and staff in hand. Ye shall eat it in haste, it is the Lord's passover.*

Verse 11.

The meaning is plain. The whole man must respond. There must be no delay, and no uncertainty. Israel is to march, and the whole being must be alert. The haste is the measure of the earnestness. They wait until the Lord passes by, and then they go

swiftly as, eager to be disciples, men left their nets or their dead kindred and went after the Lord;¹ and as men watching for Him would be able when He knocked to open immediately.²

While they did this, the Lord would *go through the land and smite the firstborn, both man and beast, and against their gods* He

Verses 12, 13.

would *execute judgments*; but when

He saw the token upon the houses He would *pass over*. Here, as usual, punishment is spoken of as the act of God, but it is really the act of man who goes against the order of the universe. And this is the division between those who prosper by that order and those who suffer from it, that this one token of life, the feast of the lamb, is found with the loyal, but not with the rebellious.

The law of the annual feast is then given, but in every subsequent year it would be a feast of *seven days*, during all which time

Verses 14-20.

unleavened bread must alone be

¹ MARK i. 18; MATTHEW viii. 22. ² LUKE xii. 36.

used; and every one who refused to keep it so must be *cut off*; and the feast must begin and end with days of *holy convocation*. As the years pass and the full import of the Divine call reveals itself, for seven days, the measure of the fullest sanctity, the soul will keep the feast, seeing that to abandon this is spiritual suicide. And it is not to be kept without the closest sympathy of soul with soul, the holy convocation. So the supper of the Lord, the Christian passover, calls for communion of spirit, for oneness in Him. The *sojourner* as well as the man born an Israelite must keep it, showing that the whole nature obeys the Lord if true order of life prevails from above.

All was to be done as commanded, and with *a bunch of hyssop*, the symbol of discipline, the
purged heart,¹ the doors were to be
Verses 21-27. marked; and all were to remain
indoors through this time, signifying no wander-

¹ PSALM li. 7.

ing of the mind to other purposes. Moreover in future years when *children* would ask why this was done, the father must tell the whole story for the Lord's sake and their own.

Hearing all this the people, who saw the majesty of God now revealed, *bowed the head and worshipped. And the children*

Verse 28.

of Israel went and did, as the Lord commanded. It is a state of perfect faith, unutterably good while it lasts, and it is a foretaste of heaven. It says, "Not my will but thine be done."¹

PHARAOH SUBMITS.

In that night Israel feasted, but Egypt fainted for fear, *for there was not a house where there was not one dead*; and the king,

Verses 29-33.

forgetting his threat of death if Moses saw him again, sent for him and Aaron, and said, *Rise up, get you forth from among*

¹ LUKE xxii. 42.

my people; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also. Completely broken, the will of the king has yielded at last to let Israel go, just as they had at the first requested; and he even said *bless me also*, confessing the power of the God of Moses. Does not everyone at times see how foolish is sin, and at such times does not one say that all true blessing is not in wickedness but in righteousness? Moses is vindicated here as was the Lord when the centurion, looking on his crucified victim, "glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man, this was the Son of God."¹ And Paul's jailer, convinced of his own weakness before the prophets of God, "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was straightway baptized."²

¹ LUKE xxiii. 47; MARK xv. 39. ² ACTS xvi. 33.

ON THE MARCH.

At once the movement began — *The people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in*
Verses 34-36. *their clothes upon their shoulders.*

A good purpose gains nothing by delay. "Salute no man by the way," said Elisha to his servant, sent to the house of the bereaved Shunammite to bear the staff and place it on the child.¹ The right hand is weakened if men let the left hand know its purpose.² When the Lord sent forth the seventy He said, "Salute no man by the way."³ It is the wise man who does not leaven the best impulses of his heart with selfish considerations, but goes straight to his works of righteousness.

Now was it that the Egyptians willingly gave *gold, silver and raiment*, types of the treasures of experience, and presently needed

¹ 2 KINGS iv. 29. ² MATTHEW vi. 3. ³ LUKE x. 4.

to adorn the Tabernacle, symbol of religious life.

The first hour of the liberty of Israel was one of movement. It is selfishness which is idle; service is activity for other's
Verses 37, 38. sakes; true life is progress; and

the children of Israel journeyed from Raamses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot that were men, beside children. And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks and herds, even very much cattle. The people had been originally placed in the district of Goshen in the northwestern part of the land. This is once spoken of as "the land of Raamses,"¹ probably because the district was afterwards so known from its chief city built by the Rameses, the oppressor of Israel, whose work on that and the neighboring city of Pithom was probably still going on. Israel had nothing to leave but the land and the little houses made of the soil

¹ GENESIS xlvii. 11.

and soon to crumble back to it. Perhaps they went from all directions to the city and thence to a camping place called therefore Succoth, like the other places of that name in Palestine or near it.¹ They had but about thirty miles to go to pass over the border, and they would move straight for the sunrise.

The number six hundred thousand may be derived from the census taken about a year later by tribes.² It is a round number suggestive of the full and rapid development of the people and spiritually descriptive of the power gained by endurance. The children would represent those later qualities which would mature in time. The mixed multitude became soon a source of weakness, and it is easy to see that, made up as it was of other subject races who had not been instructed in knowledge of one God, it represented the unconverted elements in humanity, that so often hinder the growth of true religion.

¹ GENESIS xxxiii. 17; PSALM lx. 6. ² NUMBERS i.

It is said that the *sojourn of Israel in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years*, a statement

Verses 40-42.

which early caused difficulty and continues to do so. Unless generations not given in the text intervened between Levi and Moses the number is much too large, but it is not too large when connected with six hundred thousand men, and the two statements stand together. If the sojourning of Abraham in Egypt be included and thus the whole relation of Israel to Egypt, the period is about right. The number four hundred and thirty has marked significance, for four hundred is from forty, the number of years in the wilderness and of days in the Lord's temptation, and so it stands for discipline and tribulation; while the number thirty, the years of Joseph and David and the Lord when life was fully entered upon, means maturity of inward state; thus this combination represents growth by discipline, life enriched by arduous but necessary experience.

The law as to who might eat of the passover

is plain if it be noted that it was for all who
were prepared for it by *circumci-*
Verses 43-50. *sion*: until the life be in process
of improvement the Christian passover is mean-
ingless and profitless. That they must not go
about to eat in several houses evidently means
the need of simple steadfast purpose. *Not to*
break a bone of it is to carry out the idea of
refraining from interfering in the work of the
Lord, as was true also of building the temple
when no sound of axe or hammer was heard.¹

The Lord thus brought out the children of
Israel *by their hosts the selfsame day*. In that
season when all the power of the enemy was
brought to naught, when the Lord had made
His presence felt as never before in Israel, and
when all hearts, filled with awe, sought only to
obey Him, in that day, that most momentous
day, Israel moved like an army from Raamses
to Succoth along the land of its sojourn towards

¹ KINGS vi. 7.

the Mount of God. It was an event of immeasurable importance to the nation which still keeps the passover, but it is of even greater importance to those who can read the spiritual sense, who see how wonderfully every willing-hearted one is led out of the tyranny of the flesh into the liberty of the sons of God; for, if the Lord doth make them free, they shall be free indeed.¹ What march of Alexander, of Napoleon, compares with that of people going forth by their hosts from slavery to sin unto a good land and a large!² "Thou calledst in trouble and I delivered thee."³

In this vivid conjunction of life with death, of Israel moving to the Mount of God from among the Egyptian corpses, there is set forth the eternal law that the old must die when the new is born. "He that loseth his life shall find it."⁴ The Lord laid down His own life to take it again in glory. "I die daily," saith the apostle.⁵

¹ JOHN viii. 36. ² EXODUS iii. 8. ³ PSALM lxxxi. 7. ⁴ MATTHEW x. 39. ⁵ I CORINTHIANS xv. 31.

Men may rise on stepping stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.¹

And while the dead bury their dead, the living forget the things which are behind and stretch forward to the things which are before, pressing toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.²

SACRED FIRSTBORN.

One of the first commands which Israel received on leaving Egypt was, *Sanctify unto me*

CHAPTER XIII. *all the firstborn*, a law which was

Verses 1, 2.

first of all intended to save their lives; for it appears from excavations to have been the custom to sacrifice the firstborn for the sake of the younger children. At Gezer and Taanach this practice has left its traces in bones of infants buried under corner stones. Ahaz, a king of Jerusalem, sacrificed his son.³ The king of Moab made a burnt offering of

¹ Tennyson. ² PHILLIPIANS iii. 13, 14. ³ 2 KINGS xvi. 3.

his son.¹ In Leviticus one finds the practice prohibited in severe terms, showing the prevalence of it.² Instead of the child being made a victim, it was the Lord's and so was saved alive as His.

The law of the passover is repeated to emphasize it as a perpetual ordinance. Further teaching is then given as to sanctifying the firstborn both of man and beast. The child was to be redeemed, that is, it was to be bought back from the Lord by an offering. This is seen when Mary brought the infant Jesus to the temple and gave him to the priest, who accepted him for the Lord, and then gave him back, and took instead the offering of the poor, two doves.³ Here appears the spiritual meaning, that the beginning of growth in every soul, its firstborn of God, shall be hallowed, not defiled by low and selfish aims, but made to do the will of the Lord.

¹2 KINGS iii. 27. ²LEVITICUS xx. 2-5. ³LUKE ii. 22-24; Ederheim's Messiah, Book II., Chap. vii.

There was an especial provision that the young *ass* should be redeemed by means of a *lamb* or a kid; and if not redeemed, then

Verses 11-15.

its *neck* should be broken. The ass was not to be sacrificed because it was regarded as unfit or unclean. Either it might be redeemed by substituting a clean animal, or with an owner unwilling to furnish a lamb or kid it was to be slain, implying that by it is signified a quality so low that it cannot be accepted as sacred. And this law for the first-born is also a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt when those sons were slain that these might prosper, typifying the rejection of the perverted natural life to save the spiritual. "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."¹ This law was spoken of as *a token upon the hand and as frontlets between the eyes*, meaning that thought and deed must conform to its spirit.

¹ MATTHEW V. 29, 30.

SUCCOTH TO ETHAM.

Coming now to the actual movement again, we read that *God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines although*
Verses 17, 18. *that was near; for God said, Lest*

peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God led the people about, by the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. Had the Israelites followed the usual seaside route they would have had little more than a hundred miles of desert travel before they would reach the limits of their Promised Land; but they would have gone straight against a nation much stronger than themselves, afterwards their formidable enemies until subdued by David, and now and for three centuries unconquerable. The history of the Philistines is not fully known, but they were, as their name implies, colonists, probably from the Island of Crete, and they seem to have

held the use of iron as a monopoly, so that Israel in Saul's time was dependent on them for weapons and tools.¹

Dwelling in five walled cities, the Philistines were too strong for Israel, wholly unaccustomed to battle, and therefore Israel could not safely be led that way. The "Philistine" has become a byword for a coarse person who does not appreciate art or learning; and this is not far from the signification of that nation, if a religious point of view be taken; for the Philistines, in constant hostility to Israel, in their defiance by Goliath, and in their repeated assaults upon David, represent infidelity despising religious humility and indulging in the pride of superior knowledge. "I will cut off the pride of the Philistines," saith the Lord by the prophet.² Against such power Israel could not stand, and therefore their way must be longer and less direct. It is thus that the Divine Mercy meets

¹ I SAMUEL xiii. 19-22. ² ZECHARIAH ix. 6.

the weakness of men, giving up the way too hard for them and going around with them until an easier way is found, not breaking the bruised reed nor quenching the smoking flax.¹ "Why cannot I follow Thee now?" demanded Peter, and he was for going straight on; but he could not do it, that very night he would yield to fear; he could not follow his Lord then, but might do so "afterwards."²

Instead then of going northeastward Israel held a more eastward course, the way of the Red Sea, or more correctly, the Sea of Reeds, the shallow water lying along the line of the modern Suez Canal. And they *went up armed* means probably that they held some simple weapons such as shepherds carry, thus prepared in a degree for strife and moving with some form, although not yet given the order of camp and march later prescribed.

It is a most interesting and important fact

¹ ISAIAH xlii. 3. ² JOHN xiii. 36-38.

that *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him,*
for he had straitly sworn the chil-
Verse 19. *dren of Israel, saying, God will*
surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones
away hence with you. Sojourning so long in Egypt and honored so highly, Joseph never swerved from the promise to his fathers, but was sure that Israel would have at last the land of Cănaan. There and there only should his bones be buried. The oath is told as it was exacted by him in his last words, and his body had been embalmed and put into a coffin of wood.¹ No doubt it had remained with his descendants, and now it went with Israel as a pledge of future good. As Joseph is a type of the Lord in his love of his brethren, his forgiveness of their crime and his saving them alive, so his bones, borne by Moses, would represent the Lord going on the way with every regenerating soul, pledging ultimate victory.

¹ GENESIS l. 25, 26.

And they took their journey from Succoth and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness. This was the Egyptian frontier.

Verse 20.

Etham is well known from the Egyptian records. It was the gateway of the desert. Israel had probably moved so far along canals of sweet water from the Nile, over the usual road eastward, and now they are about to leave Egypt, as they believe. But their

movement is guided by a column

Verses 21, 22.

of light, cloudlike by day and luminous by night. *The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people.* Evidently they had a glimpse of the light of the other world, as Moses had at Sinai, as Ezekiel and other prophets had, and as the disciples had at the Mount of Transfiguration; and so the Divine presence was made known to them continually.

So is it in every one's progress. The Lord is his light and the light of the world,¹ the

¹ JOHN viii. 12.

everlasting light,¹ so that he does not walk in darkness but has the light of life. By day, in states of peace and power, this light may be less fully perceived; but let trouble and temptation come, let the darkness thicken in the shadow of the valley of death, and the light gleams forth "to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace."² And it *goes before*, because heaven is above and not below, before and not behind.

TURNING BACK.

So far Israel had gone eastward, but they had been directed to go first to Sinai and bow themselves before the Lord there.³ On this eastward course Israel would pass far to the north of Sinai, and therefore a southeasterly course must be taken and adhered to for a long time. This would seem to require only a turn

¹ ISAIAH lx. 19. ² LUKE i. 79. ³ Chapter iii. 12.

from Etham southward, but no, Israel must turn back altogether: *Speak unto the children*

CHAPTER XIV. *of Israel that they turn back, and*

Verses 1, 2. *encamp before Pihahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baalzephon; over against it shall ye encamp by the sea.*

It may be that Israel found at Etham the usual garrison to defend the frontier from repeated invasions, and it may be that the expression *armed*¹ implies that in approaching Etham the people made some effort to force their way, but could not do so. However that may be, they were commanded to turn southwestward within the Egyptian boundary and go along by the sea to a well-defined spot where the sea would lie across their path. This spot lay between the water and three other places, but none of these is as yet so clearly located as to be without doubt, and therefore one must be content to leave the precise place undetermined. Nor is it possible to say as to the water, just

¹ Chapter xiii. 18.

how far up the land the Red Sea or Gulf of Suez extended in those days, but it probably did extend farther than now, a shallow sea with many reeds, hence called *Suph*.

This position was apparently fatal to Israel, for *Pharaoh will say, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them*
Verse 3. *in*. In other words Israel is to be

so placed as to be helpless and to look death in the face. The utility of Israel going into despair and then being saved, is seen from its repeated decisions to forsake the Lord for the gods of Egypt. It must then be repeatedly taught to look only to the Lord; as the Psalm says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word."¹ Moreover, Egypt, although so severely disciplined, is not yet satisfied that God can deliver, and it will make a final effort, as the forces of evil, often subdued, made against the Lord when in Gethsemane

¹ PSALM cxix. 67.

came the hour of the power of darkness.¹ This is the meaning of the words, *The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord.*

Verse 4.

PURSUIT BY EGYPT.

Israel, yielding apparently to necessity as well as command, left Etham, and found rest in the place assigned, but the king was swiftly informed.

Verse 5.

Then naturally, *the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?* As the old nature in a man, subdued by penalties of suffering, is quick to reassert itself as soon as the sufferings cease and to feel that it yielded too easily, so Pharaoh proclaims that a mistake has been made and that selfish interests may yet be vindicated against God and His people Israel.

¹ LUKE xxii. 53.

He made ready his chariot, and took his people with him; and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt,

Verses 6-9.

and captains over all of them. And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel, for the children of Israel went out with a high hand. It is easy to see the energy of this movement. The king called out his own six hundred chariots and also all other chariots of near stations. Each had its experienced captain or fully armed soldier, and each its driver to manage two spirited horses. Of such chariots Israel had not one, nor had it any means of defence against such a charging force.

Hitherto the king had employed cruelty in his treatment of Israel to bring about their subjugation, but now he will annihilate them. Chariots and horses represent the crushing power of the old mind in man in its final and desperate effort to have its way, even if the deliverance of the enslaved has been by the *high hand* of God. "Away with Him, crucify Him,

His blood be on us and on our children" ¹—such is the mad reasoning of the Pharaonic spirit. When it is said that the Lord *hardened Pharaoh's heart*, the meaning is as before of evil as well as good attributed to God, though men are responsible for turning His life in them to sin.

TAUGHT TO TRUST.

The Egyptians soon came upon the camp of Israel. *The children of Israel lifted up their eyes and, behold, the Egyptians marched*
Verse 10.*after them, and they were sore afraid, and they cried out unto the Lord.* This is the end of human resource, and it is just the time when Israel should have exercised that trust which it had been taught in Egypt. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." ² But Israel had learned no trust and never did learn. A few learned to trust God's providence,

¹ JOHN xix. 15; MATTHEW xxvii. 25. ² PSALM lvi. 3.

Moses, Joshua, David and especially Daniel; but the people, looked at from their subsequent history, had always "their heart not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant." ¹

At once they turned upon Moses as if he were their chief enemy: *Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us*
Verses 11, 12. *away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we spake unto thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians? For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.*

This is weak humanity seeing no way forward because it is faithless, and begging to be allowed to fall back into all baseness. The answer to this attitude is like that of the Lord to the shrieking disciples, "It is I, be not afraid." ²

¹ PSALM lxxviii. 37. ² MATTHEW xiv. 27.

Verses 13, 14.

And Moses said, *Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you to-day; for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.* Because men need such times when they can only "hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord,"¹ they have them; and even the Lord in the times of temptation "stilled and quieted His soul like a child weaned of his mother;"² but deliverance is ever at hand for them that wait on the Lord.

Verse 15.

Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward. Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on dry ground. The sea was like Noah's flood, it was like the Jordan rolling between Israel and its land; the sea in such cases is the type of infernal falsities engulf-

¹ LAMENTATIONS iii. 26. ² PSALM cxxxi. 2.

ing men, like the flood cast out of the mouth of the serpent to destroy the woman and her child.¹ The Sea of Reeds was the ally of Egypt, but God could do with it what Egypt could not, He could bear it back, saying, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."² As our Lord went straight through the midst of the foes of men, to preach deliverance to the captives,³ so God would lead Israel through the sea, but their enemies would perish therein.

Verses 17, 18.

EGYPT ENGULFED.

First *the pillar of cloud* removed from before them and stood behind them, and the one host *came not near the other all the night.*

Verses 19, 20.

The accompanying *angel*, the guiding influences of heaven, acted as a check upon the movements of the Egyptians. As there are

¹ REVELATION xii. 15. ² ISAIAH xliii. 2. ³ 1 PETER iii. 19.

states of life when the soul advances under the lead of the Holy Spirit, so there are other times when it pauses before difficulties, wearied and discouraged, and then the help which is needed and given is protection, a power which neither slumbers nor sleeps, and which watches over Israel, preserving it "from all evil from this time forth and even forever more." ¹

In that night was the wonder wrought. A strong east wind blew, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Verse 21.

The power of the wind, which easily pressed back the water, reminds one of the mighty rushing wind of Pentecost,² of the wind of the story of Noah which caused the waters of the flood to recede,³ and of the angels holding back the winds until those were sealed who were not to undergo the judgment, which would be wrought by letting the power of heaven in upon the abodes of those who were to be judged.⁴

¹ PSALM CXXI. 4, 7, 8. ² ACTS ii. 2. ³ GENESIS xviii. 1. ⁴ REVELATION vii. 1.

The waters, so divided towards the lake northward and the main sea southward, were *a wall*,

because no one could approach
Verse 22.

Israel from the sides. And Israel marched over the space between, which may have been a slight ridge from which the waters would fall either way.

So all was plain for Israel, moving swiftly in the morning light with fresh hope. And Egypt

as quickly *pursued* with its chariots,
Verses 23-25.

still sure of victory. But they were soon in difficulty. It is said *that in the morning watch the Lord looked forth on them through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited them. He took off the chariot wheels, and made them to drive heavily, so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.* This is easily understood. As both fire and cloud are named it was evidently in the twilight of dawn that the chariots dashed into the breach, but galloping horses sank deeply in the sand, and wheels, adapted only to level roads, were strained

and loosened, and a panic came upon the men. It is in the morning watch of a new hope that faith strengthens; "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;"¹ and then the powers of evil are correspondingly weakened: "in the night all the beasts creep forth, the young lions roar after their prey; the sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens."² Again Egypt is subdued, the old nature confesses the power under God of the new nature, of Israel.

But it does not end there. Already Egypt has lost cattle, crops and firstborn; it must lose its chariots and horses as well as their men. There is a life which gains, from one talent to ten, and there is one which loses even that one talent because it will not use it well. *The waters*
came upon the Egyptians, upon their
Verses 26-31. *chariots and upon their horsemen.*
The sea returned in its strength when the morn-
ing appeared. And the waters covered them;

¹ PSALM xxx. 5. ² PSALM civ. 20-22.

there remained not so much as one. And Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore. And the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses.

There is a time in every contest with sin when it ceases to fight. Egypt was now fully conquered, and by means of its own persistent assaults. The hour of the power of darkness was really that of the defeat of the prince of this world, for he came and found nothing in the Lord to control.¹ So Egypt could not touch Israel. The destruction of Egypt here, like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and like that of the tribes afterwards defeated by Israel, shows the ending of an older era which had sunk into idolatry, giving place to the new religion given at Sinai.

¹ JOHN xiv. 30.

SONG OF TRIUMPH.

In sense of increasing weakness Egypt attempted to flee, the men apparently mounting

CHAPTER XV. the horses, but the sea overpowered

Verses 1-19. horses and riders. Then as Egypt fell Israel rose, and full of faith for the time it sang its song of triumph, expressing the vital truth that the Lord alone had conquered and *would reign forever and ever*. Probably Moses sang the lines first and the male chorus repeated

Verses 20, 21. the words, while Miriam and the women, taking their timbrels and dancing as they sang, repeated again the words, *Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.*

Would that Israel might remain in this mood; would that all on earth might thus sing the songs of heaven; but, since such stability of faith lies as yet beyond the most of men, so let the seasons of brief peace in triumph be fully celebrated with

the psalm in the church or on the daily path-way, until out of great tribulation men learn at last to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," and to "stand in white robes with palms in their hands; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."¹

AT MARAH.

After Israel had been delivered from the Egyptians and had sung its song of triumph, many weary miles were to be traversed. Regeneration is not gained at baptism, nor by any single experience. It is a long and a toilsome process since humanity became what it is. The Promised Land was far from the Red Sea. Therefore, *Moses led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur.* This wilderness was a tract of sand and gravel, a place of tribulation, a place of discipline where faith would be proved

¹ REVELATION vii. 9, 17.

in many ways. There is no progress in life unless, through temptations endured, the life can learn to choose the good and refuse the evil. Our Lord seemed to deserve no such trials; but, without the temptations or attacks of evil which went with Him all the way and culminated on the cross, He would not have won a single victory, nor advanced a step in the process of His glorification. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. Then came the voice saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."¹ "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof,"² because a merciful Providence permits only that degree of trial daily which may make for victory.

Therefore, to teach this lesson of faith, Israel was led into the wilderness of Shur where Hagar had had her first trial,³ and *they went three days in the wilderness and found no water.* A time

¹ JOHN xii. 27, 28. ² MATTHEW vi. 34. ³ GENESIS xvi. 7.

of great suffering had come, for they no more walked by the canals of sweet Nile water. They had probably taken water from the Wells of Moses, as they are still called, near the sea, but that supply was exhausted, and they were athirst. To one who has felt this parching misery the spiritual meaning is not hard to explain. The "living water" which the Lord described to the Samaritan¹ is the truth of His teaching, given to comfort and strengthen the spirit in life's journey. Having this, one never thirsts because always the uplifting influence of the Gospel is felt, but to one in the early stages of regenerate life there are seasons of weakness, when passion parches the nature and it longs like David for a draught of the water of childhood's well.²

This route of Israel has been carefully searched out,³ and it is probable that a brackish well of white limestone water by which stand two

¹ JOHN iv. 10. ² 2 SAMUEL xxiii. 15. ³ "Desert of the Exodus," by Palmer.

stunted palms is the very place to which they came eagerly ; but alas, *they could not drink of the waters, for they were bitter ; therefore the name of it was called Marah.*

Verse 23.

A life of good is not pleasant to the natural man. He tastes the waters of self-sacrifice and patient service, and they are bitter. Discouragement ensues. *What shall we drink?*

Verse 24.

cried the people in despair. There was but one remedy, to seek the Lord. This was done, *and the Lord showed Moses a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet.*

Verse 25.

Moses a tree, and he cast it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet. The remedy was at hand, as is often the case, but despair hides it.

Something of wood, put into the water, counteracted its brackish taste, and made it palatable. The honest purpose of fruitbearing, that is, of a useful life, takes away the bitterness of any duty injuring pride and self love, and makes the yoke easy and the burden light.¹ The sorrow

¹ MATTHEW xi. 30.

is turned into joy when the good deed is done with its pain.¹ Israel was happy again.

And here the lesson was taught *as a statute and an ordinance*, that if they would have faith and obey the Lord, He would put
Verses 25, 26. on them *none of the diseases put upon the Egyptians. I am the Lord that healeth thee.* The diseases are the plagues, which Israel had seen but had not endured, nor will they ever suffer from them if they do right. But murmuring and doubting and denying will bring on those very plagues. Let Israel beware then. And the warning is for all, not to repeat sins of disbelief, but from one such experience to take the needed lesson that the Lord reigneth and will provide. "Lead us not into temptation," is the prayer, because men are to shun it, not seeking the ways of it, but seeking to be strong and constant in faith. One Marah should be enough, never to be forgotten, but there are still to come the Meribahs at the waters of strife.²

¹ JOHN xvi. 21. ² EXODUS xvii. 7; NUMBERS xx. 13; PSALM cvi. 32.

REST AT ELIM.

Again the chastened people move forward and presently come to a beautiful valley in which
were and are many wells and a great
Verse 27. grove of palms—in the symbolic language of Scripture *twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees*. Not wells of standing water but springs were in Elim, giving abundant drink, and under the broad, cool shadow Israel might enjoy a true Sabbath rest signified by seventy, as twelve stands for all those sources of refreshing in the Divine Word. The name Elim would seem to mean the noble growth of the palms as contrasted with the scanty herbage of the desert. Such a place in life is a garden of the Lord. As one has written, —

To-day 'tis Elim with its palms and wells,
And happy shade for desert weariness;
'Twas Marah yesterday, all rock and sand,
Unshaded solitude and bitterness.

FED WITH MANNA.

No doubt Israel took its ease at Elim while the pasturage lasted. But Sabbaths are prepa-

CHAPTER rations for new labors and are
XVI. worthily spent only to that end.

Israel must move on to another beautiful place, but by a very difficult road. They must now make their way down to the seaside and pass among rocks on a narrow stretch between the sea on the right and the mountains on the left, known as the Wilderness of Sin, perhaps so called from places of miry clay.

They are said to have arrived at this stage
*on the fifteenth day of the second month after their
departing out of the land of Egypt.*

Verse 1.

Exactly one month has been passed upon the road. The passover was eaten on the fourteenth day of the first month, and that night the movement began. Fourteen suggests a

double sabbath, a completed state; but fifteen, like eight, suggests a new beginning. Thus the chronicle of the journeys in Numbers says that Israel departed from Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month,¹ and Jeroboam on that day of the month began his idolatry at Bethel,² and the mission of John the Baptist began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius.³ And the new departure here was the great change of condition by which Israel was fed by the manna daily. This is really a step in heavenly progress, to come to be conscious that all life is from the Lord, the living Bread, and to look forever to Him for good, and never in vain. But faithless Israel was as usual in despair rather than in confidence when the help came as provided by the Lord.

They murmured against Moses and Aaron, they said, *Would that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, when we*

Verses 2, 3.

¹ NUMBERS xxxiii. 3.

² I KINGS xii. 32.

³ LUKE iii. 1.

did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. Of so little faith were they that it never occurred to them to ask the Lord for needed aid, but they ignored Him and chided His appointed leaders as cruel men.

Answering these murmurs as always with infinite patience the Lord said, *Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you.* The

Verses 4, 5.

law of the manna then followed: the people must go out and gather it every day, but on the sixth day they must gather twice as much as on other days.

What are we that you murmur against us? said the two accused; *your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.*

Verses 6-10.

Come near before the Lord, for He hath heard your murmurings; and Israel looked, and saw the glory of the Lord.

They were then told that *between the evenings* (at the very same hour as that of the passover

Verse 12.

feast) they would *eat flesh, and in the morning* they would be *filled with bread*. So it was, for *quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning, when the dew was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, as the hoar frost on the ground*. The birds came but once, the manna daily. Even now the traveller on such shores may find birds, wearied with long flight over the water, hovering near the earth and easily taken. There is some difference of opinion as to the birds or whether they were birds rather than flying fish, but little doubt need be felt that they were the short winged birds migrating from Africa in the Spring and arriving when sorely needed. Yet their flesh does not represent the permanent heavenly food, but rather that lower sort nearer to the passions which means danger of excess, as was more fully shown in a subsequent case when the plague followed the feasting.¹

¹ NUMBERS xi. 33.

It is the manna which was permanent until Israel entered upon its inheritance and ate the grain of Canaan. There is a small white exudation from the desert shrubs which was valued by the people of old and gathered. The Egyp-

tians called it man or manna, and
Verse 15. when the Israelites said *What is it?*

they used in their language the same sound.

Of course no such supply as was required and as was furnished at all seasons for nearly forty years was obtainable from shrubs. Israel had still their herds and flocks and might sometimes get fruits, but for bread dependence must be placed upon manna. It is said that it was there on the ground in the morning when the dew or mist rose before the sun. What could it have been but an outward form of that love which is "angels' food"!¹ As the Lord took five small loaves, and blessed, and distributed to thousands,² so here the people were fed by

¹ PSALM lxxviii. 25. ² MATTHEW xiv. 21.

Him and not by the usual sowing and reaping. The miraculous in earth is the common way in heaven, and in the spiritual life while still in the flesh men should learn to pray for that daily bread of life by which their better part may be satisfied.

The law of the manna is most instructive. A proportionate amount was to be gathered, and

therefore they took up *some more*
Verses 16-18.

and some less according to their families, and by observing the rule of the *omer* (about two quarts) for each one, none was wasted.

Even so according to the need is the Divine supply, and no man shall hold buried talents,¹ nor say to his soul, "Thou hast much goods laid

up, take thine ease."² Therefore

Verses 19, 20.

Moses said, Leave nothing of it until the morning, but they disobeyed, and *it bred worms and stank*, as good turns to evil in a life of waywardness. *Morning by morning they*

¹ LUKE xix. 26. ² LUKE xii. 19.

gathered it — “new mercies every morning”¹ —

Verse 21.

through the week. Each day the unused part *melted* and disappeared *when the sun was hot*, to signify that the rise of self-love consumes or dissipates the unappropriated innocence, the state of the sweet, calm morning.

Two portions on the sixth day is the sign of growth, of increasing good enabling the soul

Verses 22-24.

to enter upon its sabbath of rest and peace. And so Moses said, *Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy sabbath unto the Lord; bake that which ye will bake and seethe (or boil) that which ye will seethe; and all that remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.* Thus does life rise and fall, go forth in its effort and return to its rest, and the Lord hallows that rest for the sake of the days that must follow. Moses warned them solemnly that they would find none on the ground on the sab-

¹LAMENTATIONS iii. 22, 23.

What Israel did outwardly, laying up the *pot of manna*, people are now to do inwardly, keeping the remembrance of the living Bread which came down from heaven to give life unto the world, not as the fathers ate manna in the wilderness and are dead, but as a man eateth and liveth forever,¹ fed by the Lord, who is way, truth and life.²

For *forty years* it is said that Israel was so fed because that is the number significant of probation, with Moses in Midian, already explained, with Elijah in the desert, and with the Lord in His temptation. And they were so fed *until they came to a land inhabited, to the borders of the land of Canaan*, for that land stands for the end of life's discipline, the border of heaven, and it is written in Joshua that Israel did not have manna any more, but "did eat of the fruit of the land";³ and this describes that glorious life elsewhere set forth

¹ JOHN vi. 51, 58. ² JOHN xiv. 6. ³ JOSHUA v. 12.

in the vision of the "tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month,"¹ a life which, as compared to this life's journey in the wilderness, is as day to night and as paradise to desert.

It is remarkable that at this chapter's end, after all this important history, there is a little verse which the critic looks upon as a mere gloss, a late addition. But it also has its spiritual significance, although it only says that *an omer is the tenth part of an ephah*.

Verse 36.

The ephah was a well-known measure, the omer is never mentioned in Scripture except in this chapter. Why then was it brought into use, with this necessary explanation that it was equivalent to the tenth of an ephah?

Because the tenth part is so significant. People gave tithes or tenths of all to the priests.² Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek.³ Jacob promised tithes to God if he came in peace from

¹ REVELATION xxii. 2. ² LEVITICUS xxvii. 30. ³ GENESIS xiv. 20.

Padan-Aram.¹ With many of the sacrifices a tenth deal or tenth part of fine meal was to be joined.² If only ten righteous were found in Sodom, it would be saved.³ The meaning comes to view in the saying of Isaiah that after the cities were destroyed for their iniquity, there would be "a tenth, and it would return, like a terebinth or an oak whose stock remains when they cast their leaves."⁴

This remnant, which is holy and therefore safe, is the omer, the tenth part of the ephah; for what men give to the Lord is saved to them, and what they spend for self is lost. What is received from the Lord and used in His service is measured with the omer, the tenth, and it abides forever in the soul which is as a temple of the Lord. "Bring ye all the tithes, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing."⁵ When the omer was

¹ GENESIS xxviii. 22. ² NUMBERS xv. 4. ³ GENESIS xviii.

32. ⁴ ISAIAH vi. 13. ⁵ MALACHI iii. 10.

used to measure the daily food, and when it was used again to lay up a remembrance of the Divine mercy, then the tenth part of an ephah served as the heavenly type of that life, which is not self-centered, but is a stewardship; and he who keeps the Communion with his Lord receives manna and lays it up, "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."¹

Such a measure, exemplified in such a life, leaves nothing over, for it uses all its powers as it should; and it has no lack because it is "rich toward God,"² rich in faith, rich in love, rich in fruitage of all serviceableness. No disease of Egypt, the brutish life, comes upon it. Its one gains ten talents, not one buried, but ten at work; it is faithful over its few things until it comes into authority over many.³ It is such a life which labors not for "the meat which

¹ LUKE xii. 33.

² LUKE xii. 17.

³ MATTHEW xxv. 21.

perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.”¹

MASSAH AND MERIBAH.

Israel had passed along the eastern shore of the Red Sea until the place was reached where
 CHAPTER XVII. the route turns from the sea and

Verse 1. ascends by a pleasant valley to the higher ground where Moses had been called of God. This valley was called *Rephidim*, meaning a place of refreshment. But the season had now advanced into summer, there was little water to be found except in deep wells, *and there was no water for the people to drink.*

When this is read the thought that it has occurred before arises, and it is not strange that it should seem to some that here is only a different account of the event at Marah; but it is not so. At Marah the people found water, but it was unfit to drink; here there is none. There the

¹ JOHN vi. 27.

water must be healed, here it must be produced.

Verses 2, 3.

In both cases the people murmured, to be sure, but there the likeness ceases. Here as before they *strove with Moses: they said, Give us water*, and they demanded to know why he had brought them so far only to destroy them, their *children* and their *cattle with thirst*. This faithless attitude is certainly repeated again and again. It is the attitude of the unregenerate mind. It lacks faith because it lacks love. In prosperity it forgets to be thankful; in adversity it forgets past help and thinks God a liar. If there were not such a heart in man we should not have the seeming repetitions in this history.

Evidently this time the rage of the people through suffering went farther than before.

Verse 4.

What shall I do? cried Moses unto the Lord, they be almost ready to stone me. The situation was indeed desperate; but spiritually it is so in every life. Water fails when passion parches the nature and no refresh-

ing relief from heaven is found. Then men hate the conscience that has led them to make the effort now defeated. In the extremity of temptation the Lord said, "I thirst";¹ how much more must men say so, yet not patiently as He said it, but angrily as if to "curse God and die."²

The answer given to Moses' despairing cry was most prompt. *Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of*
Verses 5, 6.
Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

The answer to be given to the murmurers was spectacular. Moses, taking old men with him, moved forward toward a cliff, carrying the sacred

¹ JOHN xix. 28. ² JOB ii. 9.

staff, once in use by him as a shepherd, then exalted as the more than kingly sceptre which had waved over the Nile and brought forth the plagues ; and with this rod he struck the face of the rock, and waters gushed out abundantly. There was no time to dig wells down to the bed-rock along which water was making its way. The water stored by winter rains in the mountain must be had at once, and one blow would bring it forth.

So majestic was this act, and so impressive the scene, that it is no wonder that it became the theme of psalms — “He smote the rock that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed ;”¹ “He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out ; they ran in dry places like a river ;”² “He turned the rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters ;”³ and Paul is found saying, “They drank of that spiritual rock that followed them ; and that Rock was

¹ PSALMS lxxviii. 20 ; ² cv. 41 ; ³ cxiv. 8.

Christ.”¹ And this is the spiritual meaning ; no rock followed them literally, but spiritually the Lord is the Rock, and He gives the living water, and so refreshes His disciples that they never thirst. In His Word is the water of life, and men smite it with Moses’ rod when they seek beneath or behind the history and statute and parable for the spirit that quickeneth.² Such a one drinks of the brook in the way and therefore lifts up the head.³

This place of despair was called Massah, “proving,” and Meribah, “striving,” because when Israel was thinking to test
Verse 7. God — *Is the Lord among us or not?*
— in reality He was testing them who were of little faith.

WAR IN REPHIDIM.

A long rest must have been taken there. The valley had become a paradise. Troubles

¹ 1 CORINTHIANS x. 4. ² JOHN vi. 63. ³ PSALM cx. 7.

were forgotten; shame over unbelief quickly passed; and content reigned everywhere. But they were occupying land claimed by others, by the descendants of Esau,¹ and as soon as the desert tribe could be gathered they attacked Israel. This was a new experience. Death by hunger or thirst they had feared, but this danger was so much more terrible that fear seemed to have paralyzed them. They did not chide Moses, they were still in powerlessness.

Amalek was a great tribe of the desert, and *Rephidim* was their border. They came shout-

ing on after the Arab manner, sling-
Verse 8. ing stones, shooting arrows, and seeking to get within the space where spears could be used. It would seem that Israel, surprised, made no attempt to flee, and that Amalek withdrew a little for the morrow's decisive combat. Their preparations were already made, but what could Israel do?

¹ GENESIS xxxvi. 12.

Moses turns to *Joshua*, who now appears for the first time and is called by anticipation by his later name, when Oshea, "help,"

Verse 9. was joined with the Divine name Jehovah, and so formed Jehoshua and then Joshua. He it was who would be Moses' successor, the leader of Israel in the conquest of Palestine. His name, identical in Hebrew with Jesus in Greek, reveals his representative character. Moses represents the Divine truth in statute, Joshua is that truth in act. The Lord Jesus was the Word made flesh, the conqueror of evil, the founder of the kingdom of heaven. With no earthly weapons did He fight, but with "the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God." ¹

Joshua, in the prime of life, must lead in the battle — *choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek*; but Moses, already aged,

Verse 9. will take another part. *I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my*

¹ EPHESIANS vi. 17.

hand. While some fight others shall pray. While the powers of active life struggle in temptation, the more interior nature, secure on its hill, will look up for blessing. Below are the din of battle and the pain of wounds, above is the power of God wielded by the rod of God. While Martha wearies herself with honest striving, Mary sits at peace;¹ and both these planes of life should be developed for good in all.

So it was done. On the *morrow*, type of a new stage of experience, Joshua led forth his men before the camp, and *Moses*
Verse 10. *and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill.* In the work in Egypt Moses and Aaron took the lead, representing as was shown the Divine Law or Word and its true interpretation. Why is a third man, Hur, added to them here? Little is known of him except that he was of Judah, not Levi, and was the grandfather of Bezaleel who was given skill to

¹ LUKE x. 39.

do the embroidered work of the Tabernacle.¹ Thus Hur was an old man, and it is said later that he was left with Aaron in charge of the people when Moses went up into the mount.² There is much tradition about Hur, and he is known to have afterwards occupied Bethlehem;³ but he appears in this connection only as a companion of Aaron, an elder as Aaron was a priest, thus representing the application of truth as well as its teaching.

The battle was joined, one side pushing the other back and in turn yielding ground. For it is said that, *when Moses held up his hand,*

Verse 11.

*Israel prevailed; and when he let
down his hand, Amalek prevailed.*

This is prayer, bringing down into the life the grace of God and giving victory over evil; or on the other hand, being intermitted, and then evil prevails. It is the alternation of life in constancy and in negligence.

¹ Chapter xxxi. 2. ² Chapter xxiv. 14. ³ 1 CHRONICLES iv. 4.

If there shall be complete victory, the whole day must be given to it, and therefore when

Moses' hands were heavy, they took
Verses 12, 13.

a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun, and Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. How significant the scene, this double life of the internal and external man represented by the one group on the hill-top and the other in the battle below. Raphael has painted the glory of the Transfiguration on the mountain and at its foot the father with his suffering son among the helpless disciples. So the Lord was often in mountains for prayer, and came down again to heal the diseased and obsessed.

A signal victory it was, and one never to be forgotten. *The Lord said to Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, that*
Verse 14.

I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. There were numerous tribes remaining from the older civilization, and some of these, like the Hittites of Hebron who sold Abraham the tomb, or like those Midianites who received Moses among them, were friendly to Israel; but others were utterly opposed. In other words by some of the tribes, the promises made to Abraham and his seed were received with respect as true, but others rejected them and set themselves to defeat them. In the latter class Amalek was prominent, representing false and perverted thinking full of hatred of Divine law. With this spirit in one's self no compromise can be made; it must be uprooted, and therefore Israel must give no quarter to Amalek then or at any time, or it would be itself destroyed. In a later passage Amalek is spoken of as smiting "the hindmost, all the feeble behind" Israel,¹ implying that, although defeated,

¹ DEUTERONOMY xxv. 18.

Amalek hung about the march killing any who could not keep up. So does evil seek the weaker places and like a beast of prey seizes on those less strong in righteousness.

In token of this great deliverance Moses built of loose stones *an altar* in Rephidim and called

it, *The Lord is my banner*, and this

Verses 15, 16.

he did because they were now soldiers of the Lord against *Amalek from generation to generation*—forever. To build an altar is to consecrate a state of life, to give the glory of a victory to the Lord, and to register a vow that His cause shall be the cause of His faithful servants.

VISIT OF MIDIANITES.

In strict accordance with the rule of spiritual life, reward followed trial; the crown after the cross. Israel received another visit,

CHAPTER
XVIII.

but how different its spirit! Amalek had come to destroy, Midian came to do good. In His temptation the Lord had first the

enemy and then the friend before Him — “the devil leaveth Him, and angels came and ministered unto Him.”¹ So here Amalek retires in defeat, and Midian comes in peace to bless.

After the manner of the country Jethro sent word to Moses that he and Moses’ wife and

sons drew near to greet him, and
Verses 1-6.

Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare, and they came into the tent. Here is the relation

Verse 7.

of warm friendship. Midian represented the best preserved traces of the older religion. Its people were still serving God. Its heart was warm for Israel whom God had saved. Like John the Baptist, the Jew, saying of the Christ, “He must increase, I must

decrease,”² Midian heard the story
Verses 8-11.

of the deliverance, and blessed God for it, and declared that Jehovah was *greater than*

¹ MATTHEW iv. 11. ² JOHN iii. 30.

all gods. Not only this, but as priest of his people Jethro offered a *sacrifice*, and invited

Aaron and the elders to the feast.

Verse 12.

The simple yet solemn meal of the desert sheik stands for that union of hearts, the communion of saints, so essential to the Lord's kingdom on earth, and therefore provided for in the Holy Supper. The wife of Moses now rejoins him to represent the affection for truth which the approach to the mountain of God requires. In strife against temptation men use the intellect lest they be deceived, but the subsequent peace brings forth distinctly the element of love.

But this visit of Midian had a use to perform, and this use was seen *on the morrow* which Moses spent, as always when not on the

Verses 13-23.

march, in hearing and deciding the problems of the people in all kinds of difficulty. *They stood by him from the morning unto the evening.* In the advancing life a thousand perplexing questions arise, and it is hard to get at

the right and wrong of them. What is the remedy? That comes by the Divine Providence in its own time. In the loving atmosphere now about Moses the word of wisdom was heard. He must divide the people and arrange them by *thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens*, and set over these *able men, fearing God, men of truth hating unjust gain, and let them judge the people at all seasons*. This is order, the beautiful ordering of heavenly life, where is such subordination of less to greater that the Divine law rules throughout, governing the lower by the higher. Exactly as it is in the body where every part owns allegiance to the rest and obeys the controlling will — “the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”¹

Jethro's good advice, immediately acted upon,

¹ EPHESIANS iv. 16.

was most beneficent, and Israel, which had been a mere mass of people, became a nation with effective government. The great causes were to come to Moses himself, and only those. His power would be enhanced, because he could attend fully to the most important matters. The mind, distracted with many anxieties, gets on very slowly, if at all; but when order is established it turns to essential things most effectively. To the question, why did this system come through Midian and not direct from God, the answer is that He gave no unneeded word, and that Midian was an old race full of experience which could instruct a younger one like Israel, as if a son.

Moses did as he was advised, and all went well. *And Moses let his father-in-law depart; and he went into his own land.*

Verses 24-26.

This seems surprising, for Moses certainly needed the wise counsel of Jethro, but does it not mark the very wisdom of Jethro that he desired to go away rather than to remain

in the attitude of a guide? John the Baptist did not cease his work to go with the Lord. The angels do not impose their care upon men. They come when most needed and give important aid, and then they go their way again, as the angels at Bethlehem gave their glorious hymn of praise to the shepherds, and then "went away from them into heaven."¹

Amalek, it is written, lingered to harass Israel; not so Midian, because Midian really loved Israel. Therefore the two parted in love, and each went his way, Midian back to the simple, righteous life beneath the stars, and Israel without further delay to the mount of God, there to receive its high commission. So, with contact with both friend and foe, the advancing life gradually leaves its Egypt far behind, and reaches its first great goal, the sense of the near presence of God, the shining of His light in the mind. So is it true that men pass,

"To where beyond these voices there is peace."

¹ LUKE ii. 15.

BEFORE THE MOUNT.

In leaving Israel Egypt had not gone straight to Canaan, for it was too weak to expel the tribes

already there; it was led first to
CHAPTER XIX. the mountain of God, not only to become inured to the desert life, but also and more especially to receive its commission as a nation and as a nation destined to a peculiar office. Accordingly on the day of his appointment to be the national leader Moses had been told to bring the people to Sinai so that they might worship there.¹ Thither therefore they came after such experiences as typify a life of spiritual progress.

In the third month after the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. In three months to a day they had covered the distance of about

Verse 1.

¹ Chapter iii. 12.

three hundred miles, and for many months they were to rest here. The group of mountains has at its centre four small valleys converging, and

these would give space for the camp.

Verse 2.

On the south side of this space Ras Sufsafeh, "cliff of the willow," rises abruptly. Here they *camped before the mount*.

The number three marks completeness, as has long been seen. The trine in God, Father, Son and Spirit, are represented in the soul, body and action in man. Nothing in life is complete unless it has begun in the will, and advanced by the intellect into a plan of action, and so ultimated itself in effect. The Lord's prediction that He would rise on the third day¹ was in keeping with the symbolism of this number throughout Scripture. His three appearances² to the disciples after His resurrection fixed the first day of the week as "the Lord's day"³ and perfected the proof of His victory. Most appro-

¹ MATTHEW xvi. 21. ² JOHN xxi. 14. ³ REVELATION i. 10.

priately therefore, under the full moon of the third month after leaving Egypt, Israel pitched its tents among the mountains, now denuded, then probably verdure clad. There they lifted up their eyes to the hills whence came their strength,¹ no doubt conceiving of God as making His home in this impressive stronghold.

Then *Moses went up unto God, and God called unto him out of the mountain.* The final going

up of Moses into the mountain to
Verse 3. remain forty days and to bring down the ten precepts written on stone tablets, came later. At first he must learn how to prepare the people for the revelation to come. He probably went toward the spot where the bush had gleamed on his sight when a shepherd, and there by the voice of an angel God told him what to say to Israel:

Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought

¹ PSALM cxxi. 1.

you unto myself. By this powerful image was

Verse 4.

Israel impressed with the thought of its own helplessness to escape from Egypt and to go all this way save as God carried it. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, the Lord alone did lead him," sang Moses near the end of his life;¹ and because the Lord had done all this He now unfolded His purpose in it all.

If faithful, Israel is to be *a peculiar treasure above all peoples, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.* Not that Israel was better

Verses 5, 6.

than other nations, much less that God rejected other nations through partiality to it; it was later distinctly told that it was chosen not for its "righteousness or uprightness of heart, for it was a stiffnecked people."² Israel was ignorant of God, slow to believe in Him, prone to idolatry, and base in every

¹ DEUTERONOMY xxxii. 11. ² DEUTERONOMY ix. 5, 6.

thought ; yet it had a peculiar capacity to stand as the representative of the true church that was to be, to perform with exactness symbolic rites, and to preserve with extraordinary diligence the written Word. This had been foreseen. It had been made known four hundred years before to Abraham. It was now to be consummated at Horeb.

Moses came down and told *the elders* what he had heard. In awe they promised obedience to every word. And this Moses again bore back to the mount. Then came the definite command that they *be ready against the third day*, for then the Lord would meet with them.

On that third day with clean garments and bodies they must stand before the mount. They must *not go up into it*, nor *touch* the face of it lest they die. The sound of the *trumpets* exceeding loud will summon the people. For every event the heart must be prepared, and this is especially true of the religious life, for the mind tends to neglect its spiritual

Verses 7-12.

Verses 13-15.

interests and to sink itself in worldliness. In Israel only an outward purity was enjoined; but this, which was all that could be expected of it, was significant of inward purification and of that three days during which the Lord put off all the nature open to temptation and wounds, and was glorified in His Divine incorruption.

Then came the day of days : *when it was morning there were thunders and lightnings, and a*

Verses 16-18.

thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people that were in the camp trembled.

And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the nether side of the mount. And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

What a contrast is here with a day when the Lord "seeing the multitudes, went up into the mountain, and sat down, and opened His mouth, and taught, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit!" Yet the Divine love was the same and

only changed its form in adaptation to the two eras.

To Israel God must speak in this portentous manner, or His words would have no effect. Even when He spake so, the effect was not lasting. Of our Lord the Jews demanded signs because they were still "a wicked and adulterous generation,"¹ and therefore in mercy signs were given at Horeb. The precepts which they were to receive would not be so impressive to them as the manner in which they were given. Egypt virtually had these precepts and included them in the funeral ritual of the judgment of a departed soul. But they were now to be given to Israel as its fundamental law, and given most distinctly. The quaking of the mount, the thunder, the lightning, the peal of trumpets, were so many signs of the supreme dignity of the laws and show how truth uttered in heaven may reverberate on earth, as was said when a voice spoke to the Lord in Jerusalem, "the people that stood

¹ MATTHEW xvi. 4.

by and heard it said that it thundered.”¹ The influences of heaven come to those who love them as gently as any summer breeze, but to those who are not of the heavenly mind there are “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and very great hail.”²

There upon the mount in the midst of the portents God *answered Moses by a voice, and called Moses up into the mount, and*
Verses 19, 20. *Moses went up.* The traveller now sees on one side of the steep cliff a narrow defile by which one may pass into the higher reaches of the mountain, and that was probably the path taken by Moses.

He was told to go down again and warn the people to stand in their places, and not to *break*
Verses 21, 22. *through to gaze*, and the *priests* also must *sanctify themselves* lest they die. In an age and country of marked irreverence such caution seems unreal, but often afterwards Israel learned the risk of disrespect for

¹ JOHN xii. 29 ² REVELATION xi. 19.

sacred things, as when the fire of the altar consumed the rebellious men who offered incense in the spirit of strife,¹ or when a man put his hand upon the ark and fell dead.²

Moses declared for the people that the caution was needless, but he learned in time how little they could be trusted. The Lord
Verses 23-25. then said that *Moses and Aaron* alone might come up, but not *the priests* nor *the people*; implying that they two as before were to be the means of teaching the people and their priests. So do the Scripture and its true interpretation stand between God and men, and thereby He comes near to them with blessing and not with judgment.

¹ NUMBERS xvi. 35. ² 2 SAMUEL vi. 7.

THE DECALOGUE.

So far as appears here, the commandments were not first read to the people from tablets, but were orally given by Moses on that great third day, and to them were joined other statutes. The ten form the head of them all. They divide themselves as is well known into two parts, one showing man's duty to God, the other man's duty to man. As it was Jehovah God who had *brought them out of Egypt* they must have *no other gods*, and it is to be noted that the Lord does not come before men as One who has done nothing and yet demands their worship, but as the One who has done and is doing everything to deliver them from sin, and so deserves their cooperation in gratitude.

To make a *graven image* is to take some quality of the nature and cultivate that, like beauty or strength, to the neglect of real piety. God is *jealous* in this sense that He is true to Himself, and consequently to do right

CHAPTER XX.

Verses 1-3.

Verses 4-6.

prosper and to do wrong is harmful; but the effect of wrong doing descends but little way compared with that of righteousness in which is the eternal power of God.

Verse 7. Blasphemy is guilty of dethroning God and so is destructive to man.

The *sabbath* was already well known, but its observance is enforced anew for all, meaning that in the spiritual life all parts must be given opportunity to develop. Even the Lord rests from His labors with men, leading them through *six days* of discipline to the *seventh*, that is, to the peace of heaven.

By honoring *the father and mother* is meant to serve the Lord and the church in their unitedness, for so men may live an enlarging life.

Verse 12.

To *commit murder* is to destroy spiritual life; *adultery* is mingling good and evil in life; *stealing* is depriving others of values in innocence and faith and peace.

Verses 13-17.

Bearing *false witness* is making wrong appear to be right. *Coveting* lies within the mind and is

not an outward act. Evidently men covet when they seek to do evil but dare not, and so are really in the evil. Thus the Decalogue was completed.

LAW OF THE ALTAR.

When these words were heard *the people trembled*, and drew back, and begged of Moses

Verses 18-21. to speak for them with God, since they would *die* if they heard Him.

Moses reassured them, saying that God had come to *prove them that they sin not*. Then Moses again ascended and heard many precepts applicable to worship and life.

One of these concerned the *altar* to be of *earth*, not of *hewn stone*, for this would spoil the altar; nor were they to build up

Verses 22-26. *steps* to it. The meaning is that the soft, gentle heart truly worships the Lord; but not an artificially formed system of truth, with no purpose of fruitfulness. To go up by steps is vain show, and this would disclose the shame of pretence.

LAW OF SERVANTS.

There is a command as to a purchased *servant*, showing that the custom prevailed of giving one's

body as a surety for debt. *Six*
CHAPTER XXI. *years* of service would bring liberty,
Verses 1-6.

which means that a quality at first requiring restraint grows to free exercise. The servant refusing liberty has his *ear bored* to signify the subordination of a quality not ready for liberty.

So with a *daughter* sold by a man. Her rights were fully guarded, and any injustice set her free.

Verses 7-11. Here is a lesson of preserving every subordinate affection from injury.

LAW OF RETALIATION.

Several sins follow, all to be punished with death, purposely *wounding a man, smiting father*
or mother, stealing and selling a

Verses 12-17.

man, cursing father or mother; because all these sins represent evils fatal to spiritual life.

Other commands relate to the effect of *quarrels*, of *scourging a servant*, of injuring an *unborn child*, and of disfiguring a servant.

Verses 18-27.

Here is the penalty of *life for life*, *eye for eye*, and so on, and that is the law of that plane of life on which Israel stood, the law of retaliation.

Again the dangerous *ox*, the *pit* not protected from an animal falling in, and the *injuring* of one

animal by another are provided
Verses 28-36.

against, for the law of the Lord is a protection against harm to anything of spiritual value.

OTHER LAWS.

So *stealing* is fully punished, perhaps by death, at least by restoring more than was taken, to

CHAPTER XXII. signify the duty of all to repair the

Verses 1-19.

harm they do. So of injuring a *field* and its restitution. So of harm done by *fire*. So of anything entrusted to another and lost. The remedy must be adequate ; and so in case of an animal in another's keeping. And

again sins against innocence were punished. Nor must a sorceress be allowed to live, because there comes in the danger of evil spirits controlling people of this world to their injury in slavish subjection.

Verse 20. To *sacrifice* to another god would be death, for spiritually it destroys man.

To the *stranger*, to the *widow* and *orphan*, and to the *poor man* the law was very kind. No one might oppress them, and the debtor's *garment* in pledge must go back to him before night. This shows that unmercifulness is not known in true life.

Verses 21-27. No unfaithfulness was permitted, to *God* or a *ruler*, and there must be no *delay* in making the *offerings*. The claim of God on the *firstborn* is a most important provision on account of the prevalence of child sacrifice, of the firstborn for the rest; and when the firstborn is given to the Lord, that means a holy beginning of the life's whole development. The priest gave back the child, but it was still

the Lord's, and was redeemed with a lamb or two doves as the child Jesus was redeemed.¹ The same rule held of the increase of cattle.

Be holy men unto Me, said the Lord, *eat nothing torn by beasts in the field*, for that is carrion,

and carrion represents the dead and worthless affections spoiled by passions.

Verse 31.

JUSTICE FOR ALL.

There must be no *false speaking*, for misrepresentation stands for a false life; nor any per-

CHAPTER XXIII. version of justice even for a *poor*

Verses 1-3. *man's sake*, since that mingles kindness with dishonor.

The animals of others must be cared for, showing that neighborliness is essential.

Verses 4, 5.

There must be no oppression of the weak and no bribery, for injustice signifies cruelty, which is infernal.

Verses 6-9.

¹ LUKE ii. 22-24.

The *fields* must have their Sabbath, that is,
a seventh year of rest, typifying
Verses 10-13. a hallowed, peaceful life.

ANNUAL FEASTS.

Three great annual *feasts* must be kept; *unleavened bread*, or Passover, in the spring; *first fruits*, afterwards called Pentecost,
Verses 14-19. in early summer; and *ingathering*, also known as Tabernacles; thus representing a life acknowledging the Lord at every stage. *Leavened bread* must not be offered with the flesh, for that signifies a mixture of evil motive. Keep not the *burnt offering* until the next day, for that means holding for self what is God's. The very *first fruits* must be brought, thus placing religion always first. *And they must not boil a *kid in its mother's milk*, for this represents mixing old states with more innocent new ones.

PROMISES RENEWED.

At the close of these precepts are sweet promises. The Lord's *angel* would lead them, and they must honor him. The Lord would

Verses 20-33.

be an *enemy to their enemies*. He would drive out their foes. They must *serve* Him, and not the idols, and if they obeyed, there would be no *sickness*. His *terror* and his *hornet* would go before them, and *little by little* their enemies would give place. A great land would be theirs, from the Red Sea eastward to the Mediterranean westward, and from the desert southward up to the Euphrates. Only they must *drive out* idolaters, and not *dwell* among them, and so be corrupted.

How beautiful a life prospect! Angels leading, obstacles withdrawing, no weakness, no despair, no disaster, a gradually enlarging field of service, if only no compromise with sin be made. The terror and the hornet represent the effect upon evil and falsity of the Lord's power

in the soul. Nothing can stand before it. As the Lord said to the seventy, "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you."¹ So shall men go "from strength to strength,"² from the strength of obedience to law and humiliation before God to the strength of abiding in the Lord and the everlasting joy which is His. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews felt this when he said to the early Christians, "Ye are not come to the mount that burned with fire, nor to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, so that Moses said, I exceedingly fear; but ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to innumerable hosts of angels and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. See that ye refuse not Him."³

¹ LUKE x. 19. ² PSALM lxxxiv. 7. ³ HEBREWS xii. 18-25.

THE WRITTEN COVENANT.

Upon the arrival of Israel at the mount of God three days were given to preparation for that great event of meeting with God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Then came the clouds and lightnings and words as of a trumpet, and God spoke through Moses to the people the laws of the Jewish religion. Having so done, concluding with promises of blessing if the laws were obeyed, the Lord let them disperse to their tents; but ere long came a new revelation, for laws were not enough, and institutions of worship by a priesthood were next to be given. Such institutions seem of little present importance until it is seen that the ceremonies of Israel, like its experiences and its laws, bear a lasting significance and contain inspired lessons. A form indeed was the Jewish church, a set of representative rites merely, yet a form so perfect as to be for all time, when "spiritually discerned,"¹

¹ CORINTHIANS ii. 14.

the symbol of essential religion. The New Testament is the unsealing of the Old Testament.

Moses was again called into the mount, this time with a company of chosen men—*thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel*; but
Verses 1, 2. Moses alone should *come near unto the Lord*, nor should *the people go up* at all.

Already the development of the church is visible. Not only Aaron, but his sons Nadab and Abihu are named, showing the emergence of the priesthood. These two sons were afterwards slain in rebellion and profanation,¹ but for a season they were faithful. The elders presage the grand council of the nation, that council which condemned the Lord. Through these men, Moses, Aaron, his sons, the elders—the Lord made His will known, showing how in Divinely ordered revelation the Word of God comes down.

Being about to leave them for a time, and

¹ LEVITICUS x. 1, 2.

for the first time since he had become their leader, Moses told them *all the*
Verses 3, 4. *words of the Lord and the judgments,*
and they answered, *All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do.* Not only this, but *Moses wrote all the words of the Lord.* It is common to doubt this statement, and some call in question the existence of Moses, but it is plain that, if one begins here to doubt, there is no end until one is landed in the absurd conclusion of a self-evolved Judaism which had neither Author nor revelator, which would be like a Mohammedanism without any Mohammed or a Christianity without any Christ. As to the doubt about Moses' ability to write, documents written four centuries before his time are now known by the hundred.

Having so written, Moses *rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the mount, and*
Verse 4. *twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes.* This was their second altar, again a step forward in the development of the rites of Israel. Of course sacrificial worship is

all that Israel can practise. It does not know that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams";¹ and it supposes its God to be "pleased with thousands of rams," yes, even with slain "firstborn."² *Pillars* like these have been uncovered at Gezer and elsewhere.

A great sacrifice then took place of *burnt offerings and peace offerings*, every animal cor-

Verse 5.

responding to some affection to be consecrated to the service of the Lord. Thus the lamb corresponds to innocence, the ox to patient service, the dove to harmless thought. The two offerings were of *oxen*, slain by strong *young men*, as the functions of the Levites had not yet been appointed, and the burning represents a warm and willing purpose to serve the Lord, which purpose He responds to with His *peace*.

In furtherance of his preparation for leaving them, Moses put *the blood* into two receptacles,

¹ I SAMUEL xv. 22. ² MICAH vi. 7.

from one of which he *sprinkled the altar* and
from the other *the people*, and read

Verses 6-8.

to them his written *covenant*, that is,
the words of the four preceding chapters, and
said to them, *Behold the blood of the covenant*
which the Lord hath made with you concerning
all these words. To this again the people prom-
ised to *be obedient.* And this was the old cove-
nant or testament as Christianity is the new,
and both express the infinite love of God going
to meet the great needs of men.

IN THE MOUNT.

After all this ceremonial, which might have
endured in the minds of the people but did not

endure, Moses turned from them
and led his chosen company into

Verses 9, 10

the mount. And there, it is said, *they saw*
the God of Israel, under His feet as it were a
paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were
the very heaven for clearness. There is no de-
scription of a face or figure except as feet are

named. There was apparently something of an angelic form revealed so that Israel to the number of these persons might know that God was the father of the sons of men, but dazzling light veiled Him while its brilliant clearness impressed them. It was as if they looked into the sky of blue, the color of the sapphire, and saw One there as Ezekiel saw "the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone, and upon the throne the likeness of the appearance of a man. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord."¹

There is a seeming contradiction between this statement and that of the Gospel that "No man hath seen God at any time";² and again between the later saying that Moses saw God "face to face"³ and the declaration of the Lord that men had not heard the voice of the Father, "nor seen His shape";⁴ but men spoke of their seeing the Lord before His incarnation when they saw an

¹ EZEKIEL i. 26, 28. ² JOHN i. 18. ³ Chapter xxxiii. 11.

⁴ JOHN v. 37.

angel who was filled with His spirit for the time. This may be seen, for example, in the account of Gideon, to whom "an angel of the Lord came," and of this angel it is said, "the Lord looked on Gideon."¹

It is told that the Lord *laid not His hand upon them ; they beheld God, and did eat and drink*, not only indicating that they were not harmed, but also probably that they went down and joined in the sacrificial feast with the people. Israel now believed in God, and meant to obey Him, and therefore did not fear to stand before Him and to rejoice before Him. It was when disobedience made them feel that God hated them, that it was declared that no one could see God and live.²

Now Moses will go up for his longer stay, necessary to learn of the tabernacle and the priestly rites, and this time he will
Verses 12-14. take only *Joshua his minister*. Not even Aaron can go, for he and Hur, his com-

¹ JUDGES vi. 11, 14. ² Chapter xxxiii. 20.

panion at the battle of Rephidim, must take charge of the people. To the elders who were their judges Moses said, *Tarry ye here: behold, Aaron and Hur are with you.* Joshua (Greek Jesus) will be associated after this with Moses and at last will succeed him. They represent the Divine and the Divine Human aspects of truth, the Word as it is in itself and "the Word made flesh," the one telling the way of life, the other leading in it. Into the *cloud* and the *glory*

they went, and were in it for *six*
Verses 15-18. *days*, a further preparation for a sublime sabbath or *seventh day*; and on that day *Moses entered into the midst of the cloud*, and there he remained *forty days* and *forty nights*, representing completed states of instruction here, as the same number implied fulness of discipline for Israel in the wilderness, and of peace for it when we read more than once of a "rest of forty years." ¹

¹ JUDGES iii. 11; v. 31; viii. 28.

OFFERINGS OF ISRAEL.

In the beginning of the communication to Moses now following he was told to gather from
CHAPTER XXV. the people *offerings, from every man*
Verses 1-7. *whose heart maketh him willing;*
and these offerings were to consist of *gold, silver*
and copper, of spun yarns of wool ready for weaving and dyed in colors *blue* and *red*, of *white linen*, of dyed skins of *sheep* and *goats*, of *acacia wood*, of *oil* and fragrant *herbs*, and of precious *stones* to be *set* and *graven*.

All these were of Israel's wealth and were given to be the material out of which to construct their *sanctuary* precisely according to the *pattern* about to be shown out of heaven. This is the order of life. God constructs the church out of willing hearts. If men bring not the qualities represented by these offerings, nothing can be done. While Divine love gives men everything that is good, they must act in their liberty to consecrate what

they receive, or there is no temple. "Ye have robbed me in tithes and offerings,"¹ said the Lord by the prophet to unfaithful Israel, and so they had robbed themselves of all that made for the better life now and hereafter.

Many have studied this description of tabernacle and furniture, but few have approached the study from the oriental side, and none have kept strictly to the account, adding some timbered roof or other occidental element wholly out of place. The description goes straightforward without uncertainty or repetition. The construction before the mind's eye, and the interpretation, must do the same for this significant structure.

ARK AND MERCY-SEAT.

The *ark* or chest comes first as the heart of the whole. It will be made of *acacia wood* from the prevailing tree, and according to *cubit* measure. The cubit, like the foot or hand-breadth, is a primitive measure

Verses 10-15.

¹ MALACHI iii. 8.

—from the elbow to the end of the hand — and is about a foot and a half English. *Overlaying* the ark with *gold* probably means a very thin plating. A *ring* was to be placed near each corner in such a way that a pole or *staff* could be run through on either side to *bear* it between four men. These *staves* were to be always in place and never used otherwise. This chest was made to contain the two stone tablets of the Decalogue, and so it obtained its sanctity. The law on stone is the fixed and inflexible order of the universe. The inclosing wood is the heart holding the law precious. The gold used throughout represents love to the Lord, the highest motive known to man. To bear this ark in marching to Canaan is to go onward in life led by pure religion to repeated victories over sin.

The lid of the ark was to be called the *mercy-seat* or throne of God. On this lid at either

end would stand a *cherub* or angelic
Verses 17-22. form having extended *wings* meeting in the centre as the cherubim *faced*. This

lid was to be placed upon the ark and the *testimony* or tablets within, and then from the space between the wings the Lord would *meet* with Israel and *commune* with them. And this for the reason that the heart so fixed in purest love is the very abode of the Lord. "This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it."¹ "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also who is of a humble and contrite heart."² The ark of Noah was as it were a ship, and the ark of Moses in the reeds was a basket, but the meaning is similar that, where true religion holds a man, there is safety and eternal life.

TABLE FOR BREAD.

The next thing to be made was a *table* of like *wood* with *gold* and *rings*, but it would have a *crown* or raised edge, and there
Verses 23-30. were to be made *dishes*, *spoons*, *flagons* and *bowls* for appropriate uses; but the

¹ PSALM cxxxii. 14. ² ISAIAH lvii. 15.

chief use of the table was to afford a place for the *shewbread*, twelve small circular loaves renewed each week. This bread represented spiritual service which plants the truth of life, nurtures it, reaps it, and carries it through to the good on which the soul is fed. Hence the Lord in His pure love of souls is called the "living Bread";¹ and He gave the bread and said, "Take, eat, this is my body, given for you."²

THE LAMP.

Then came the *candlestick* of *gold*, shaped like a tree of one stem and *six branches*, three on either side, having little *cuplike* *lamps* at the end of each, like *almond-blossoms*; and here is the symbol of the mind luminous with revered truth before the Lord. A mind unsteady in its care for truth is a foolish virgin whose lamp goes out before the bridegroom comes, but a mind with undimmed

¹ JOHN vi. 51. ² MATTHEW xxvi. 26; LUKE xxii. 19.

love of truth has its lamp burning and goes in to the wedding of heaven.¹ It is a "burning and a shining light," and all the true hearted rejoice in it.²

CURTAINS OF THE TENT.

These three articles of furniture are first spoken of, as the three essentials, the soul of
CHAPTER XXVI. the rest; but now comes the de-
Verses 1-6. scription of the *tent* itself, or the *dwelling* as it was afterwards correctly called because in it God would dwell with Israel. *Ten curtains* must be made of the dyed material, each curtain a long straight strip six feet wide, and each furnished along its sides with loops and clasps so that one could be closely joined with another. Ten of these curtains joined would make a cloth of about sixty feet by forty-two. This would be, so to speak, the canvas, the canopy of the tent.

¹ MATTHEW XXV. 10. ² JOHN V. 35.

Another set of curtains would be of *goats' hair*, nearly black, like the Bedouin tents in use to-day; but this would not form
Verses 7-14. another tent, but a covering and protection over the colored canopy. These curtains would be *eleven* instead of ten, and a yard longer to make the protection more perfect. They would be joined like the first, and the extra width would *hang over the back* as a kind of store-room. Over this again would go *skins*.

BOARDS AND BARS.

But what would hold up these cloths and skins? What would take the place of the wall
Verses 15-30. of stones or reeds running on three sides of a tent now? *Boards* would take this place, boards of *wood*, with *tenons* below to so fit into *silver sockets* that each socket with two holes would support a part of two boards and thus join them. There would be no boards on the east end, but on the other sides the boards would stand up and be fastened at

the two *corners* with *rings*, making a firm wall. Along the boards outside three *staves* would run, the object being to fix the boards more firmly. Here again *gold* would be used, and would represent the supreme preciousness of the religious interests of the soul.

VEILS AND HANGINGS.

This room so formed would be forty-five feet by fifteen, and would be divided into two rooms, the western square, the eastern two squares. The division would be made by a *veil* of embroidered work hanging upon *four pillars* standing also in *sockets of silver* and having *hooks of gold* for the veil. *And thou shalt hang up the veil under the clasps, and shalt bring in thither within the veil the ark of the testimony; and the veil shall divide between the holy place and the most holy.* In that inmost room there must be nothing but the ark. The command proceeded that in the outer room the candlestick should be placed on the *south* side

Verses 31-37.

and the table of bread on the *north*. Then, to complete this outer room, a hanging would be set up at the entrance supported on *five pillars* in *sockets of copper*.

ALTAR FOR SACRIFICES.

In front of the tent would stand the *altar* of burnt offering, also of *wood*, but overlaid outside
CHAPTER XXVII. with *copper*, and having at its
Verses 1-8. corners *horns* or projecting points.

Within, a *grating* of *network* would allow the ashes to fall. *Rings* and *staves* were also arranged for bearing it. It was quite *hollow* and was a frame for the earth within, thus obeying the law of the "altar of earth thou shalt make."¹ To understand this altar, of copper lined with wood, to have had no earth within and no connection with the altar of earth, is an obvious error, for in that case it would be ruined by its first use.

¹Chapter xx. 24.

OUTER COURT.

Round about the tent and this altar was a court formed by *linen* hung from *pillars* set in *sockets* of *copper*, and so placed as to

Verses 9-19.

form an inclosure one hundred and fifty feet long and seventy-five wide from north to south. This court hanging was white, except that eastward the entrance portion was colored like the inner curtains. It is to be observed that copper belonged to this court, but gold to the inner rooms, and copper represents a lower and more external love than gold, but still good, like the love of doing one's daily work well.

PERPETUAL LIGHT.

The *lamp* must be always alight with the purest *olive oil*, and this *statute was forever*, as

Verses 20, 21.

expressing a soul's unquenchable purpose to wait on the Lord with "loins girded and lights burning," so that He

might never come and find one in neglectful darkness.¹

Here then is a triple division of court, holy and most holy place ; and each has its function — the inmost to contain the ark and mercy-seat, the holy to contain the table and lamp (and also the small incense altar of gold described in Chapter xxx.), and the court to contain the altar of sacrifices. These divisions represent the three planes of true soul-life — the celestial with its love of the Lord, the spiritual with its thoughtful neighborliness, and the natural with its obedience to duty. Wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, express these distinctions. Gold, silver and copper correspond to them. The head, the body and the limbs also represent them. And so do the olive, vine and fig of the Bible ; the Canaan, Assyria and Egypt of the Old Testament ; and the Judea, Samaria and Galilee of the New Testament. Israel's tent of worship is humanity consecrated,

¹ LUKE xii. 35, 36.

it is an eternal symbol seen in heaven where the ancient peoples are.

When this symbolism is fulfilled in man the saying comes true that "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God shall be with them and be their God."¹ The apostles saw to a degree this meaning and spoke of men as "temples of the living God";² and this no doubt came to them from the teaching of the Lord when He "spoke of the temple of His body,"³ "the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands,"⁴ in which "dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily."⁵

PRIESTLY GARMENTS.

The tabernacle of Israel was a tent made in every way significant of worship, of a life turned
CHAPTER to the Lord and devoted to His
XXVIII. service. Thus it stood in the

¹ REVELATION xxi. 3. ² 2 CORINTHIANS vi. 16. ³ JOHN ii. 21. ⁴ HEBREWS ix. 11. ⁵ COLOSSIANS ii. 9.

centre of the camp, regarded as peculiarly the abode of God. The rites of worship to be performed were likewise significant and were prescribed to the minutest detail. So of the priests, and especially of the high priest, everything was precisely told as to garments and adornments. Again every true life is represented, for it is "a holy priesthood offering up spiritual sacrifices."¹

Aaron and his sons were to be the priests. Aaron has appeared all along as the brother and constant assistant of Moses. He
Verse 1. spoke for him to Pharaoh. He governed the people while Moses was in the mount. His permanent duty, when the national representative church should be established, would not be so much that of lieutenant as the distinct function of high priest, while Moses would continue as judge and ruler. Moses, as has been shown, stands for the written Word

¹ 1 PETER ii. 5.

of God and for the law of God leading man by the conscience ; and his brother Aaron, warmer in temperament and more near to the people, stands for that truth applied to life, the practical interpretation of truth, truth serving and so worshipping God. Kingship is the intellectual side of righteousness, the priesthood is its affectional side. Aaron and his sons and descendants therefore become the priests of Israel and represent love serving the Lord.

They must have *holy garments for glory and for beauty*, so that the priests can *minister in the priests' office*. The garments typify

Verses 2-4.

the qualities of a religious life, its enveloping truths or principles of service to God and so to man. These garments were of the same materials as the inner curtains

Verse 5.

of the tent, for spiritual truth is one, like the inner garment of the Lord, "woven without seam from the top throughout."¹

¹ JOHN xix. 23.

The first garment described is the *ephod*, or waistcoat as it may be called, made of the colored cloth with *shoulderpieces* above and a *girdle* below. On each shoulderpiece a precious *stone* was to be set and *engraved* with *six names* of tribes. *Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial.*

Verses 6-12.

Moreover on the front of this *ephod* was a *breastplate*, a piece of the cloth set with twelve *stones*, *four rows* of three stones in each row, and securely attached to the *ephod* by *rings* and *chains* of *gold*. Also in each stone was the name of a tribe of Israel; and so again *Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart when he goeth in unto the holy place for a memorial before the Lord continually.* What means the precious stone? It is not opaque, a truth of natural law seen only as law, like an axiom in mathematics; it is rather a law seen through, luminous in the mind with the

Verses 13-29.

light of intelligence seeing its Divine motive. It is not law for the servant, it is law for the friend¹ of the Lord. "In Thy light we see light."² This difference is shown in the Sermon on the Mount, not destroying the law but fulfilling it, when "ye have heard that it was said to them of old time" becomes "but I say unto you."³ These stones cannot all be identified beyond question, but the four rows no doubt conformed to the general scheme of color, passing from red to white through blue, and so representing all aspects of righteousness and in their unity all truths of life worn upon the heart as dear to the soul, and having twelve names of tribes to signify the completeness of one's sanctification. For truths inscribed upon the heart of man are stones worn on the breastplate in perpetual memorial, meaning in everlasting remembrance.

¹ JOHN xv. 14, 15. ² PSALM xxxvi. 9. ³ MATTHEW v. 22, 28, 34, 39.

The stones are called *Urim and Thummim*, "lights and perfections," and these by their effulgence or the reverse were the

Verse 30.

means of telling whether the Lord was favorable to a proposed act or unfavorable.¹ When the truths of life gleam in the mind with the warm light of loving perception, man can act from God, but otherwise he acts from self, and fails.

The *robe* or general garment is next mentioned in the order of life's consecration. It

Verses 31-35.

was of *blue*, entire, so that, in putting it on, the head was put through an opening with embroidered edge; and it had a fringe at bottom bearing alternately a *golden bell and a pomegranate*, so that the sound of Aaron's steps would be heard *when he goeth in and when he cometh out that he die not*. The very garment must sing praise. Down from head to foot it must go to represent a life

¹ NUMBERS xxvii. 21; 1 SAMUEL xxviii. 6.

wholly given to the Lord, even the border of commercial and social relations being attuned to harmony with the Divine purposes, so that no death or spiritual decay can befall. The orange-red fruit of the pomegranate, full of seeds, represents a fruitful natural life adding to the common good from day to-day.

This for the skirt, but the head had its own ornament. *Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, Holiness*

Verses 36-38.

to the Lord. And thou shalt put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be upon the turban, upon the forefront. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead. The meaning is manifest. The forehead stands for the mind, and the mind controls the life. "His name shall be in their foreheads,"¹ means that love of the Lord is the ruling motive. So here, with this fillet upon his forehead Aaron represents sanctified manhood, that is, true priesthood. And it is

¹ REVELATION xxii. 4.

added that thus Aaron *shall bear the iniquity of holy things*, which is to take away uncleanness and unworthiness of self, and in their stead to wear the pure gold of heaven-descended consecration.

Mention is then made of a *coat of fine linen*. This is the under garment, which was white.

Aaron's sons had this, but not the
Verses 39-43. colored robe. All had also white

coverings for the *thighs*. This linen is the symbol of purity. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."¹ Garments in heaven were seen to be white because they that wore them had washed them in the blood of the Lamb,² through looking unto Him and purifying themselves in His truth, "for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."³

¹ ISAIAH lii. 11. ² REVELATION vii. 14. ³ *Ibid.*, xix. 8.

CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS.

The priests must be solemnly inducted into office with anointing and sacrifices. Moses, CHAPTER XXIX. when he should have returned
Verses 1-14. to the people, and when the *tent of meeting* had been constructed, must bring to the altar a *bullock, two rams, and unleavened bread* in which was *olive oil*. Then *Aaron and his sons*, being washed, must be clothed in their *robes* of office and be *anointed with oil*. Thus would they be the priests by a *perpetual statute*. The *bullock* being then killed, its blood must touch the *horns of the altar* and be *poured out at the base*, while the *fat* would be burned upon the altar. But instead of the *flesh* being eaten, it must be *burned outside of the camp*, to typify the natural affections, the fleshly appetites, which are to be put away before one is wholly in the service of the Lord. So far as one's life is by nature evil and selfish it can serve the Lord only with self-denial. The love of service is the

oil of anointing for all good work. So little by little does a soul induct itself into its high destiny of perpetual priesthood, and rests not day nor night, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty."¹

As the ceremony was to proceed, one of the *rams* would then be killed and wholly consumed *on the altar*. This betokens progress in good

Verses 15-18.

of life. The bullock is burned outside as unworthy, a *sin-offering*; the *ram* is *burned upon the altar*, a *sweet savour*, an *offering made by fire unto the Lord*. Men offer by fire when they serve the Lord with ardent love. This ram stands for the innocence of sinless service, accepted of the Lord because it seeks to do His will.

Now the third and final step. The other *ram* would be killed, Aaron and his sons laying their *hands upon its head* as before, to

Verses 19-25.

represent in a soul that it is his own act by which he consecrates his all to God's

¹ REVELATION iv. 8.

service. Some of the *blood* must *touch ear and thumb and toe* to signify every part of the being united in love; and then the *fat* portions would be put, with the *right shoulder* and some of the *bread, upon the hands of Aaron and his sons*, who would *wave them before the Lord*, after which they would be *burned upon the altar*. This waving or moving to and fro of the offering signifies active life, the earnest and not listless purpose. David ran to meet Goliath,¹ he danced and leaped before the ark in Jerusalem.²

Then came the feast, sign of abundant heavenly reward of service, faithful over a few things and therefore entering into the joy
Verses 26-35. of its Lord.³ Moses first would have the breast, Aaron and his sons the rest. Every sacrifice in Israel was to end in a feast, for so does good life weep with its seed sowing, and come again rejoicing, bringing its sheaves.⁴ And thus Aaron and his sons, having done all

¹ 1 SAMUEL xvii. 48. ² 2 SAMUEL vi. 16. ³ MATTHEW xxv. 23.
⁴ PSALM cxxvi. 6.

that was theirs to do, would eat, but a *stranger should not eat thereof*, because that means unpreparedness and profanation. Nothing must be kept until the next day, but the fragments must be burned, to represent devotion of life to the Lord rather than keeping aught back for self. By all this the *altar* itself would be made *holy*, and *whatever touched it would be holy*, for a church has no holiness save from fervent prayer and praise therein.

DAILY SACRIFICES.

At this point was given the law of *daily sacrifice*, a lamb morning and evening, with *fine flour*

and *beaten oil* and a little *wine* ;

Verses 36-46.

for not the priests only, but all the people must have rites significant of innocent purpose. And so doing in mornings of hope and evenings of anxiety, men are borne up day unto day from wickedness. The Lord said, *I will dwell among them, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their*

God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I may dwell among them; I am the Lord their God. And so He becomes the Redeemer from bondage to the flesh more and more fully with every lamb slain, with every fresh effort to do right. So to the Lord Jesus at last Thomas, seeing that He had been saved from disbelief, cried out, "My Lord and my God!"¹

ALTAR FOR INCENSE.

It is remarkable that at this place, after all is apparently said about tabernacle and priests, CHAPTER XXX. there is given a description of a
Verses 1-10. piece of furniture for the tent not before mentioned, namely, the altar of incense. The critic naturally declares this passage out of place, and would transfer it to Chapter xxv., but calmer thought sees that the description is reserved until the use is also appropriately defined, that it therefore properly heads a distinct section of Exodus.

¹ JOHN XX. 28.

The *incense altar* was made of *acacia wood*, *one cubit square* and *two high*. It had its *crown-
ing ledge* and its *horns* and its *rings* and its *staves*, all *overlaid with gold*. Its place would be in the holy immediately before the most holy. A little *incense* of *sweet spices* must be burned upon it every *morning* and *evening* by means of a coal from the altar outside. Nothing must be offered on it but the prescribed incense, and upon it Aaron would *atone* for Israel. This beautiful little altar, sending up its aromatic smoke in the tent, completes the thought of all these representative rites. It means the sweetness and gladness and pervasiveness of religion. The odours from the golden vials were the "prayers of saints."¹ An angel with a "golden censer offered much incense with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, and the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God."² So

¹REVELATION v. 8. ² *Ibid.*, viii. 3, 4.

does a good life crown its work ; it confesses its sins, it burns its light of faith continually, it spreads its best bread before the Lord, but to complete all it sets up its incense altar, and its prayers of faith and gratitude "go forth as incense." ¹ And so it *atones* or makes itself one with God forever ; as Zacharias burned the incense, and an angel at the right side of the altar said, "Fear not, Zacharias ; thou shalt have joy and gladness ; thy supplication is heard." ²

LAW OF THE CENSUS.

Another unexpected passage is the law of the census that every man should give to the sanctuary *half a shekel of silver*. They
Verses 11-16. had no coins and reckoned metals by weight. The connection with the altar is in the spiritual meaning, for nothing so detracts from worship and violates its laws as self-appre-

¹ PSALM cxli. 2. ² LUKE i. 13, 14.

ciation, and this is remedied by counting one's powers, one's *twenty years* of preparedness for war against sin, and saying, "they are the Lord's." The silver given to the Lord is the acknowledgment that all is His that is good in man. This is also *atonement*, like the incense burned; thus the two are joined here.

THE LAVER.

The *laver of copper* is not described as to its form, but its use is told to be the washing of the priests' *hands and feet*. It stood

Verses 17-21.

between the tent and the large altar, and tradition says, on the south side. The need of frequent washings after slaying animals is plain, and obviously all true worship and service call for cleanness of motive and life. "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin: then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar."¹

¹ PSALM li. 2, 19.

OIL AND INCENSE.

The composition of the *anointing oil* and the *incense* is then given, and it appears that great

care was to be used, and no one
Verses 22-33. should ever so compound oil or incense for any other purpose, or he must die.

For the oil, essences of *myrrh* and sweet inner barks were used with *olive oil*, making a fragrant ointment with which the priests and every part of the sacred tent and furniture were to be anointed. These growing plants stand for the growth of good principles of life, and the olive oil which united them stands for love of the Lord, healing spiritual hurts and inducing the soul to service. Everything related to the religious life must have this quality, or it is false and hypocritical.

So of the *incense*. Aromatic herbs should be taken, and *beaten* to a fine powder, and mingled

with *salt*. This ingredient represents the preserving power of the
Verses 34-38. love of truth — spiritual thirst — and the *spices*

represent prayers fragrant to the Lord because they seek only for what He can give. It is consecrated incense, not to be otherwise used, for one cannot serve God and mammon.¹

INSPIRED WORKMEN.

Moses was not left to wonder how so many arts as would be needed for making all these things could be found among his unskilled people. The Lord said that He had filled *Bezaleel of Judah with the spirit of God in all cunning work in gold, silver and copper, in cutting gems and carving wood, and in weaving and embroidery, in making the priests' garments and compounding the oil and incense.* With Bezaleel would be joined *Aholiab of Dan.* It is clear that the view which Moses had had would not enable him to construct every thing from memory, though he could undoubtedly declare in the end if his vision was

¹ LUKE xvi. 13.

correctly reproduced. The Israelite work people could of course do nothing without guidance, and thus the need of inspiration was absolute. Two men were named as destined to receive this gift, one of Judah, the other of Dan. The former, Bezaleel, seems to have done the work in metal and gems, the other in cloth and wood under the control of Bezaleel. Judah was the great tribe which led the march,¹ which received the largest inheritance, and to which belonged the line of kings. Dan on the other hand was at the rear in march, received but did not hold a much smaller inheritance, and was finally not counted among the tribes,² while Judah was always first. Thus between the extremes all the *wishearted* were included. Moreover the duality of good and truth, of charity and faith, comes in here, for Judah — “praise the Lord” — represents those who love the Lord, and Dan — “judge” — represents those who look to the

¹ NUMBERS ii. 3, 9. ² REVELATION vii. 5-8.

Lord with faith in His justice. Therefore he of Judah takes the lead and he of Dan follows, and he of Judah does the more interior work but he of Dan the more exterior.

THE SABBATH.

The final word to Moses ere he left the mount was as to the *sabbath* to be kept as *a sign between God and the children of Israel*

Verses 12-17.

forever. And it is a sign that men know God and mean to serve Him, but neglect of the sabbath is a sign of life for self and the world only. It is a promise also of the life to come when the six days of tribulation and formative probation are over, and the rest from such labors is given. This is the meaning of the words that *on the seventh day God rested and was refreshed*, for man no longer strives against His providence.

TABLETS OF THE LAW.

So Moses turned to descend, having in his hand *two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.* It

Verse 18.

is of no profit to inquire how the few Hebrew words were written here, or how the warning was written on Belshazzar's wall.¹ The simple precepts without explanatory sentences were probably written, and those as to God belonged to one tablet and those as to man to the other. They would be the very heart of Israel's tabernacle and rites; but no, Israel would never have these stones, and this would be due to nothing but its own sins, for already as long afterward Israel had rejected its Saviour.

¹ DANIEL v. 5.

APOSTASY.

When Peter boasted that he would not deny his Master although others might, and when ere

CHAPTER long he declared his denial with sol-
XXXII. emn oaths, he showed the national

weakness of bold avowal and cowardly recantation; and as His Lord was not deceived in Peter, but predicted his apostacy, so the quality of Israel itself was foreseen, and all the revelation made to it was adapted to a perverse race, which nevertheless might embody in outward rites a pure religion, if it would obey and abide by the statutes given at Sinai. Therefore, after being fully prepared, Moses was descending to the people, bearing as the token of the covenant two tablets of stone with the ten laws.

But Israel had almost at once turned from Moses and Aaron when Pharaoh increased the burdens;¹ it had rebuked them
Verse 1. when pursued at the Red Sea;²

¹ Chapter v. 21. ² Chapter xiv. 11.

it had charged them with the purpose to kill all by starvation;¹ it had again impeached them in thirst;² and what were its promises before the mount,³ but so many assertions of the natural man that he will do only right, when he is as "unstable as water,"⁴ and his "words are iniquity and deceit?"⁵ While *Moses* delayed to come down, the awe of the *people* wore away; and they *gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said, Up, make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.* Fear led to disbelief, and disbelief to rejection of their God. Judas Iscariot was so moved toward his Master. To make gods for oneself is to forsake high duty and be governed by low, selfish aims. When these go before men, they stumble and fall,⁶ being blind led of the blind.⁷

¹ Chapter xvi. 3. ² Chapter xvii. 3. ³ Chapter xix. 8; xxiv. 3, 7. ⁴ GENESIS xlix. 4. ⁵ PSALM xxxvi. 3. ⁶ DANIEL xi. 19. ⁷ MATTHEW xv. 14.

Aaron did not resist. He was not yet high priest. When doctrine is cut off from Scripture,

Verses 2-4.

as it is with the dogmas of immaculate conception or papal infallibility, it obeys man, not God. Aaron told them to *break off* their *earrings* and *bring* them to him, and they did so. As the eye is the organ of understanding and the hand of power, so the ear corresponds to obedience. The gold in their ears had stood for the good love of obedience, but breaking off this gold with this purpose at once indicated disobedience, and the divinity of it was *a molten calf*.

Because Egypt as the type of natural and sensual life worshipped Apis, the bull, and because the consecration of the priests would require a bullock sacrificed before the altar but burned outside of the camp,¹ to represent fleshly appetites put away, therefore this molten calf or young bull is a perfect type of the base, Egyptian life for which the regenerating soul still

¹ Chapter xxix. 14

longs, even in the very forefront of the mount of God. And Aaron said, *These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* So does bestial man fashion a thing with the *graving tool* of his own folly and set up the self-deception as his god, to which he owes his life. It is the false witness¹ before Caiaphas traducing the Saviour, and accepted in order that He might be crucified who was their Good Shepherd.

Aaron *built an altar and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to the Lord.* Yes, a feast of

flesh and wine and lust. *Early in*
Verses 5, 6. *the morning they brought offerings,*
and then they *sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* As research brings to light more fully the unspeakable orgies of idolatry, men may see how infernal corruptions may be practised in the name of religion when they make their own gods and proclaim feasts of bestiality.

¹ MATTHEW xxvi. 60.

In the mount Moses was told what was going on below, and the very words which Aaron had spoken ; nor was Moses incredulous,

Verses 7-14.

for he knew his own heart and that of his people. The Divine purpose was to *consume* them, and to make of Moses a *great nation*. In their utter unworthiness they would be rejected forever, and the Word of God would go into other keeping. But Moses pleaded for them that the Lord should abate His anger lest Egypt triumph after all, and lest the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel be broken. Then it is said that *the Lord repented of the evil which He said He would do*. In this and like interviews Moses appears to be more wise and patient than God, and to bring Him round from wrath to forbearance. All this is the mere appearance. Men believe that they move God by prayer, but in reality they move themselves, and the ever merciful purpose of God finds its way to fulfilment through their submission to Him. So here Moses believed that he had saved his people from utter destruc-

tion, he alone to be left alive ; but in reality he had humbled himself to bear with them, and so in the Divine mercy they can be preserved ; but true religion would never be theirs.

PUNISHMENT.

Moses turned, as one goes from prayer to work, "from Jerusalem to Jericho,"¹ and went down by the ravine at one side, bearing the tablets, already rejected by Israel. They were *the work of God*, that is, they were the truths of Divine order itself, by which God drew near to dwell among them.

Joshua, as they descended but were not yet in view of the camp, declared that he heard a *noise of war*, and his warrior soul was stirred ; but sadly Moses, already told by God, answered that it was not war, but revelry. Indeed it was not war, the strife of man against sin, but the ribald song of the sinner self-deceived and boasting of his

¹ LUKE x. 30.

strength. Then came the view. Moses *saw the calf and the dancing*, representing a life given up to self-indulgence. His own *anger* burst forth, he hurled the tablets to destruction, he cast the idol into the fire, he beat it into dust, and strewed it on the water, so that Israel must drink it. How terrible is punishment, the irresistible outcome of order trampled upon! High privileges forfeited, low pleasures interrupted, idols cast down and made to enter into the life till it loathes its former delights, this is the inevitable result of sin without repentance. Men drink their idols until, like the lusting of Taberah, it comes out at their nostrils and is loathsome unto them;¹ and "the brook that descended out of the mount"² is no more clear as crystal, but foul with the ashes of the furnace of passion.

In his fierce anger Moses turned upon the brother who had betrayed him, but Aaron laid all the blame upon the people, and he
Verses 21-24. told what they said and did, and of

¹ NUMBERS xi. 20. ² DEUTERONOMY ix. 21.

his own part he said, *I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.* In this weak answer is a law of life that, if gold of good love be cast into the fire of self indulgence, a vile idol is the result.

The *people*, drunken and dishonored, represent the nature surrendered to sin. Moses *stood in the gate of the camp*, between them

Verses 25-29.

and their enemies, and shouted for those who were *on the Lord's side*. His own tribe of *Levi gathered*, and he sent them to slay the reprobates, of whom *three thousand fell*. This represents the inevitable loss by such destructive sin, and it shows the Levite, or what in a man repents and obeys the Lord, acting as a judge to condemn the unrepentant part. "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."¹ It was Levi on one side, the tribe of "conjunction" and the future priest-

¹ MATTHEW xviii. 9.

hood, and those who were still rebellious on the other—God and mammon, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Moses' command to the Levites, *Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord, every man against his son and his brother, that He may bestow upon you a blessing*, precisely describes the law that, by resisting the foes of one's own household, heavenly strength is gained. "To him that overcometh will I give power."¹

On the next day Moses went before the Lord, and besought His forgiveness, that He would still guard them. If He

Verses 30-35.

would not do this, Moses asked to be slain, for spiritually speaking Moses is slain, the "Word is made of none effect,"² if there be no church going forward under Divine guidance. To this prayer the answer was that the people would be led, but the Lord said, *When I visit, I will visit their sin upon them*, because this sinful, unfaithful life must know

¹ REVELATION ii. 26. ² MARK vi. 13.

very many punishments brought on itself. The Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem because it must fall by its own iniquity.¹

MOSES' TENT REMOVED.

After this apostasy the Lord said that the promised country was still theirs, and that He
CHAPTER XXXIII. would drive out its occupants,
Verses 1-3. but He would not go up in the midst of them, for they were a *stiff-necked people* and would surely endanger themselves by their sins. This is to be observed, that they had now changed the Divine relation to them, so that for their sakes the Lord must stand as it were aloof. So was it when Pharisees with Sadducees came to demand a sign of the Lord, "and He left them and departed."²

The people were grieved, a sad day followed one of reckless joy, and *no man did put on*
Verses 4-6. *him his ornaments*, for there is no real joy in such a life, whether exulting in evil or grieving over its self-in-

¹ HOSEA xiv. 1. ² MATTHEW xvi. 4.

flicted losses; and this is better than false enjoyment, and therefore they did not resume their ornaments, and soon found a good use for them. In self-denial is safety for the weak.

Still further carrying the symbolism of the unworthy people, in partial rejection, *Moses*

took his tent, and pitched it with-
Verses 7-11.
out the camp, afar off, and so

expressed the separation between God and the people; and thither they must go who *sought the Lord*. The church was not among them. They had removed themselves from it, although it seemed to remove from them.

Moses, thus removed, came to a new dignity. When he went out to his tent all *stood and observed him*, representing a mental attitude of attention to law. And they saw that the *pillar of cloud* stood over Moses' tent, showing that so the Lord was to be made known to them, not immediately, but through law. *All the people rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door*, showing regard for God when manifested in outward signs in accommodation

to fallen humanity. Thus Moses, but not the people, was before God, and he *turned again into the camp*, showing continued help for them from God through him; but *Joshua departed not out of the tent*, representing the remoter presence of the Lord as the Divine love, while the Divine truth, Moses, went and came on errands of judgment. If Joshua did not abide, the tree would die at the heart.

SEEING GOD.

Shaken by this evidence of weakness if they may have no outward form to worship, Moses

prays that he may see God: *Shew
Verses 12-23. me, I pray Thee, Thy glory.* He

has been in the mount, and he has come again, only to find the people falling away to an idol, and he feels that for himself and them he must see God. The presence in the cloud is sure, but it is not like seeing eye to eye, it is not enough. If he could see God, he would be satisfied that the people had been indeed chosen. This is man's craving for a

knowledge of God, of destiny, of immortality, which will remove all doubt as he believes. It is Philip saying, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."¹ But affection is cognitive, as one has said; to draw near to God is to know Him; and one cannot say, "Lo here! or Lo there!"² Moses must go up again, and place himself in a *cleft of the rock* and be *covered* with the Divine *hand* while the Lord *passed by*; and then the hand would be taken away, and He would *see* the *back*, but not the *face*. Here is the fact of every life's experience. If it will go into the mount, will rise to the best motive, and enter the cleft of the rock, the stronghold of the truth, and let the Divine hand of protection be placed on it, then as the days go it shall see the Lord's love in every passing experience. Not as life comes can its mercy be seen, but looked at afterwards it will be plain that the Lord was in it all. And blessed is he who knows this

¹ JOHN xiv. 8. ² LUKE xvii. 21.

truth, so that he can trust the Lord laying upon him a hand of discipline, well knowing that in due time the mercy of it all will be seen, like the bow in the cloud after the rain.

We hush our children's laughter
When sunset hues grow pale;
Then, in the silence after,
They hear the nightingale.¹

EPIPHANY AND COVENANT.

With two tablets of his own making, representing the changed relation now of a more external quality, Moses went
CHAPTER XXXIV. Verses 1-7. up into the mount *early in the morning*, the time significant of pure purpose; and there the *Lord passed by before him*, and a voice proclaimed Him *full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, not clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of fathers*

¹ F. R. Havergal.

upon children to the third and fourth generation.

In this is the self-revelation of God. As to those who love His order, He is helpful and wonderfully kind. As to those who oppose His order, He declares that real harm results, and to a degree descends; for, while sin cannot be inherited, the imperfection due to evil must be, and can only be eradicated by regeneration. It is exactly the same Divine quality which was manifested in and by the Lord Jesus, merciful to sinners, yet not failing to give warning against sin. He was the friend of publicans repentant, but saw only woes for scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.¹

Overwhelmed with this epiphany, *Moses made haste, and bowed his head, and worshipped,* pray-

Verses 8, 9.

ing that the Lord would go with them — *take us for Thine inheritance.* This prayer no doubt sprang from the hope that the Lord would be especially favorable to them and equally hostile to all others.

¹ MATTHEW xxiii. 13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29.

The thought of a God partial to a race or a sect still prevails; but it is to be observed that no answer was made to this prayer except to repeat the covenant, for the only limits of the Divine care are set by men, and all who do the Lord's will are blessed. In summary the

covenant required no dallying with
Verses 10-26. idolators, destroying all idols, re-

fraining from foreign marriages, keeping the three feasts, redeeming the firstborn, and other laws already given.

Moses, during his second stay of forty days in the mount, himself *wrote the ten words* on

the tablets; and this suggests how
Verses 27, 28. closely adapted to Israel and so to

fallen humanity is the whole Old Testament, so that some despise it, but it is inwardly Divine. If the casket must be earthly, the jewels within are heavenly. In their spiritual meaning both the Testaments put off the garments of this world and are seen in raiment white and dazzling.¹

¹ LUKE ix. 29.

THE SHINING FACE.

When Moses returned to Israel there was this time upon his face no black cloud of wrath and disappointment, but *the skin*
Verses 29-35 *of his face shone*. The people saw it and *were afraid to come nigh*, but he called to them and told them *all that the Lord had spoken*. Then he *covered his face with a veil*, but he took this off when He spoke before the Lord. Here is the law of revelation. It must be veiled to common eyes, veiled in history and parable and psalm, or else it cannot reach them; but, seen with the eyes of the spirit, it shines in glory. When the Lord dwelt in the flesh there was no beauty that men should desire Him,¹ but in His risen glory His face did shine as the sun;² and the promise is now fulfilled, "they shall see His face."³

¹ ISAIAH liii. 2. ² REVELATION i. 16. ³ *Ibid.*, xxii. 4.

THE WORK OF CONSTRUCTION.

- CHAPTER XXXV. The remainder of Exodus
Verses 1-19 shows the performance of com-
mands, the call for offerings,
Verses 20-29. the ready contribution of every-
thing needed, the work of Beza-
Verses 30-35. leel and Aholiab, the restraint
CHAPTER XXXVI. of the people from bringing
Verses 1-7. more than was required, the
Verses 8-19. making of curtains and cover-
Verses 20-38. ings, the fashioning of the
boards and pillars; and then
CHAPTER XXXVII. the furniture was made, the
Verses 1-29. ark, table, lamp, and incense
altar, the ointment and incense,
CHAPTER XXXVIII. the altar for burnt offerings,
Verses 1-23. the laver and the hangings of
Verses 24-31. the court; the gold, silver and
CHAPTER XXXIX. copper were weighed and util-
Verses 1-31. ized; and then came the priestly
garments. *Thus was finished all the work, and*

they brought it all to Moses, and he saw it all,

Verses 32-43. *and blessed them.*

TABERNACLE ERECTED.

They put it all up on the *first day of the first month*. They had been a year out of

CHAPTER XL. Egypt and half a year in this

Verses 1-33. work. The first day of first month is a new beginning, a new era in the life of a man. The past is closed, the door is opened to a better life. So with Israel, its organized ecclesiastical life begins here. Everything was minutely told, and everything was exactly done. *So Moses finished the work*, as the Lord said, "It is finished,"¹ since His body was tabernacle and temple.

Then the glory filled the Tabernacle, and there it rested, leading on or causing to rest *throughout all their journeys*; and what other guidance is there than "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world?"²

¹ JOHN xix. 30. ² JOHN i. 9.

The Book of Exodus is thus seen to be the story of escape from bondage to the flesh, of human weakness causing sad hours, but of the Divine mercy in all and through all; until at last the soul, made a Bethel of worship, a habitation of the Mighty One of Jacob,¹ is prepared to take up its victorious progress, to leave its mountain of rest, and go forth into the plain of discipline, and on to the Promised Land, chastened as it goes; but at last planting its tabernacle in Shiloh, the place and state of eternal peace in the Lord.

¹ PSALM cxxxii. 5.

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